

## Loving Jesus, but Rejecting Christ

When John the Baptist came preaching the baptism of repentance, all Israel was in a state of great excitement. Around five-hundred years earlier, the angel Gabriel pinpointed that year as the time that the one called Messiah, or the Christ, would appear. The scripture says, *“And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not.”* Luke 3:15 Israel loved Christ. Or ...at least they thought they loved Christ. He was in their words and their songs. He embodied all their hopes and dreams. How great things would be when Christ appeared! They knew what Gabriel had said, that Christ would *“make an end of sins”* and *“bring in everlasting righteousness.”* Daniel 9:24-25 Although they did not comprehend that the end of sin Christ would make would be in the heart and nature of those who trusted in him, they were confident that Christ would change everything. They believed the world would be a wonderful place for them when Christ came and took his rightful throne. Even those who hated Jesus, loved Christ. The Chief priests who plotted his death did not see themselves as killing Christ. In their own minds they were only doing what was necessary to rid the nation of this Jesus who seemed to be such a threat to the establishment. Saul of Tarsus loved Christ. His rage against the church was in defense of his “idea” of Christ. It was not until he met Jesus on the road to Damascus that he understood that the Christ whom he loved and Jesus whom he hated were one in the same. Still today, most Jewish people believe they love Christ, but reject Jesus who is the Christ. Sadly, some of our renowned Christian leaders have sought to assure them that it is alright to reject Jesus as long as they keep the Ten Commandments and accept Christ as whoever he is upon his return. Those who teach such things are damming the souls of those who believe them.

Today in Christianity we find an opposite, but similar situation. We, as Christians, love Jesus. He is the embodiment of every good thing that God has for his people. We tell of his love and mercy. Such is the assurance of his love to us and our love to him that our songs often take the form of a romantic love story. We know he loves us and without a doubt we are sure that we love him. We are confident that Jesus will allow no one, not even God the Father, to bring harm our way. Yet with all the love we Christians have for Jesus, too many of us know almost nothing about what it means that Jesus is the Christ. I would say that the average Jew knows more about Christ than most Christians. Many, if not most, practicing Jews understand that because of Gabriel’s prophecy, Christ must make an end of sins when he appears. If he does not do so, he cannot be the Christ. For this reason the acceptance of sin among Christians is proof to many Jewish people that Jesus could not possibly be the Christ. For them, the belief that Jesus will forgive you over and over for the same sins that you continue to commit makes a mockery of all that Christ was prophesied to accomplish. Their idea of Christ making an end of sin often deals with nations and society instead of the individual believer, because they never understood the mystery that Paul preached, which is *“Christ in you, the hope of*

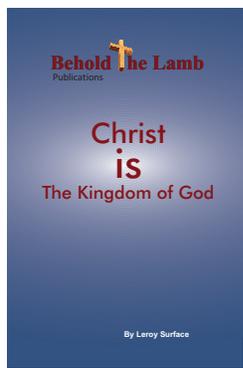
*glory.”* Colossians 1:27 He came and died to fulfill the mission of Christ “in you!” In you is where he makes an end of sin and brings in everlasting righteousness. This is the “Christ” that much of Christianity has rejected and this is why I say that Christianity is doing in reverse what the Jews did concerning Jesus. We love our “idea” of Jesus, but we reject any thought that Christ came to actually make an end of sin in anyone. If a minister says what the apostle John said, *“And we know that He was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abides in him sins not,”* 1 John 3:5-6 that minister is looked upon as one who blasphemes the name of Jesus. We love to hear that Jesus covers our sin, took our penalty, and hides us

*“Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince...”* Daniel 9:24-25

from God’s eyes (none of which the scriptures actually say), but we refuse to hear the one who reminds us that he is *“the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.”* John 1:29 Yes, we love Jesus dearly, but it seems that we have rejected the Christ. However, Jesus and Christ cannot be separated. Jesus is Christ and Christ is Jesus. What Jesus told the Jews is still true today: *“If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins.”* John 8:24 If Israel had received Jesus as Christ, they would have known the glories of His salvation and escaped the judgment of God in 70 A.D., but their love of Christ could not keep them as long as they rejected Jesus. Even so, those who love an idea of Jesus whom they believe accepts them in their sin, but reject the Christ who came to take away their sin, will find that their love of Jesus will not keep them in the hour of God’s judgment. You cannot separate the Jesus who loved you from the Christ who came into the world and died to take your sin away. If you reject one, you have already rejected the other. JESUS IS THE CHRIST!

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