



"Everything that God brings into our life is directed to one purpose: that we might be conformed to the image of Christ."  
—Erwin W. Lutzer

**16-May-03**

## *Which God Do You Worship?*

In the time when paganism was dominant, people tried to worship all the gods in the pantheon, but usually they had a particular fondness for a certain deity. For instance, soldiers may have preferred Mars, the [god](#) of war, while their wives offered special devotions to Juno, goddess of birth and marriage. Sailors honored Neptune, merchants served Mercury, farmers adored Ceres, young girls revered Venus, and so forth. The question, "Which God do you worship?" would not seem all that strange to them.

In a Christian society, however, it would at least be met with a quizzical expression, if not open hostility. Everyone, it seems, worships the same God—even Jews and Muslims and others—as there are many roads to heaven, right? So the common belief runs. Widely different religions and sects can hold various and sundry doctrines, and somehow their adherents will all wind up in paradise together.

It is a nice sentiment but hardly truthful from a Christian perspective.

I recently had a telephone conversation with a man who claims to be a Christian, but by his beliefs he does not worship the [Jesus Christ](#) of the Bible. From what I was able to gather from his rapid-fire misapplications of Scripture, He believes Jesus Christ was a created angel whom God chose to be His Son. It does not matter that the Bible makes no such claims; in fact, the Bible says Jesus Christ is the Word who has always been God and with God ([John 1:1](#)). His name in Old Testament Hebrew, YHWH, He defines

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as "I am," meaning He has existed eternally ([Exodus 3:13-14](#); [John 18:4-8](#)).

Some people worship a baby in a mother's arms. Others worship a corpse hanging on a pole. Many profess to worship a resurrected Christ who has gone to heaven to sit at the Father's right hand, yet they will not follow His message. In fact, they utterly reject what He preached from one end of Israel to the other, preferring to believe that all He really wanted was for people to give their hearts to Him and all the rest does not matter. These people think that professing His name will be enough to let them slide by His judgment seat into heaven.

Which God do you worship?

In this country, there are hundreds, if not thousands, of Christs that people worship. The One that we *should* worship is the Christ of the Bible, for all we really know of Him is revealed there. However, each denomination has a different version of Him. The Baptist Jesus resembles the Pentecostal Jesus—not to mention the Methodist Jesus, the Lutheran Jesus, and several other Protestant Jesuses—but the resemblance diminishes when we speak of the Catholic Jesus or the Orthodox Jesus. Then there are the Jesuses of the "cults" and the "heretical sects."

Which God do you worship?

Most professing Christians would be aghast to find out about the real Jesus. For instance, He kept God's law, including the seventh-day [Sabbath](#) and holy days. He was circumcised on the eighth day, and His parents made the proper sacrifice after His birth. He went to the synagogue every Sabbath—not Sunday—and read and taught from the Old Testament. He was a rugged, strong man, a builder in stone and wood. Twice, He angrily chased men and animals out of the Temple with a whip made of cords. It is possible that He knew Aramaic, Hebrew, Greek, and Latin (or at least the first two languages and bits of the last two). He likely wore His hair short, as was proper for a Jewish man in his day, and He spoke with authority, not softly and weakly. He lived His life as He did so that we would have an example to do likewise.

Before we take upon ourselves the title of Christian—follower of Christ—we had better understand the One we follow. Remember His warning:

Not everyone who says to Me, "Lord, Lord," shall enter the [kingdom of heaven](#), but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast our demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?" And I will

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declare to them, "I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness" ([Matthew 7:21-23](#)).

We cannot be worshipping Him if we do not know Him, and we will never really know Him unless we follow His example.

- Richard T. Ritenbaugh

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## *From the Archives: Featured Sermon*

### [Knowing Christ \(Part 1\)](#)

by John W. Ritenbaugh

John Ritenbaugh explains the significance of "the fellowship of His sufferings" and "being conformed to His death" (Philippians 3:10). Christ's death had both a substitutionary and a representative aspect. The former pays for our sins, but the latter provides an example (He is the archegos) that we must emulate or imitate. When we obligate ourselves (something God cannot do for us) to mortify the flesh (Romans 8:13), refusing to feed the hungry beast of our carnal nature and killing the old man, we suffer the ravaging effects of sin. Experiencing suffering for righteousness' sake accelerates our spiritual growth and enables us to know Christ.

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## *From the Archives: Featured Article*

### [Fully Man and Fully God? \(2001\)](#)

by John W. Ritenbaugh

The Bible clearly explains that Jesus of Nazareth's father was God and His mother was Mary, a human. What, then, was His nature? Was He a man? Was He divine? John Ritenbaugh urges us to understand Him as the Bible explains it.

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