

The Misunderstood Christ

by Bill Crews

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thy did not like His words, they went back and walked no more with Him. Many honest souls today have been misled to believe that Jesus died on the cross, not only to save their souls from sin, but also to heal their physical bodies of diseases. They mistakenly think that the primary purpose of the miracles of Jesus, at least the miracles of healing, was to make sick people well, and they hold out the false hope of miraculous healing for all physical illnesses to anyone who has enough faith.

3. **Men misunderstood His teaching.** Many knew that He spoke with authority and not as their scribes (Matthew 7:28-29; following *“the sermon on the mount,”* Matthew, chs. 5-7). Some knew that *“never man so spake”* (John 7:46, the response of the temple *“officers”* when after being sent to arrest Him, they came back without Him). But overall they did not understand His teaching. Jesus asked, *“Why do ye not understand my speech?”*; and went on to answer, *“Even because ye cannot hear my words”* (John 8:43). Because of their prejudices and preconceived ideas and foolish expectations, they could not really give His words a fair hearing. Read Matthew 13:10-17. Jesus labored to remove the errors that had become lodged in their hearts and sought to move their minds from carnal channels into spiritual. As examples, see John 2:18-20; 3:3-6; 4:10-11. Even the apostles were slow to grasp, often doubted, and sometimes strove against His words. Among men today He is to a large extent **“The Misunderstood Christ,”** and the Bible is to a large extent **“The Misunderstood Book.”** Consider how most understand Matthew 7:1 (never judge anyone); John 8:7 (don’t rebuke anyone who has sinned unless you are without sin); Ephesians 2:3 (*“by nature”* means everyone is born with a sinful nature); 2:8 (we are saved by grace alone and faith alone); Romans 11:26 (all the Israelites will one day be saved); 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 (the righteous will be raised 1,000 years before the wicked) and Revelation 20:1-10 (Christ will reign on this earth 1,000 years). *All of these are wrong and out of context.*
4. **Men misunderstood His silence.** He was silent before Caiphas the high priest (Matthew 26:62-63), before Herod Antipas (Luke 23:8-11) and before Pilate (Mark 15:3-5; John 19:8-11). This may have been taken by some to mean that He was unable to answer the charges against Him or even that He was guilty of those charges, but His silence was foretold by Isaiah some 750 years before (Isaiah 53:7). His silence in His revealed, written word is misconstrued by many today. In the absence of any authorization from the Scriptures for their practices, they reason that if God didn’t say not to, then His silence on the subject gives consent or gives them license to act. *“The Bible doesn’t say not to”* or *“Jesus didn’t forbid it”* is as close as they can come to finding Bible authority for their practices, but we are governed and regulated by what the Bible and the Lord did say. We are not to go beyond the things that are written (1 Corinthians 4:6); we are to abide in and not go beyond the doctrine of Christ (2 John 9). We are not to preach another gospel, and are anathema (or accursed of God) if we do (Galatians 1:8-9). Whatever we do, in word or in deed, is to be done *“in the name of”* or *“by the authority of”* Christ (Colossians 3:17).
5. **Men misunderstood His church.** They lost sight of the real nature and mission of the church. Jesus did not come to liberate the Jewish state from the Romans and to reign over them from Jerusalem. He came to seek and to save those who were lost in sin, to die on a cross as a sacrifice for the sins of all men, to be raised from the dead in triumphant victory, to ascend to the Father where He would receive dominion, glory and a kingdom that He might reign in the hearts and lives of those saved from sin. His kingdom is not of this world (John 18:36). It came not with observation for it is *“within you”* (Luke 17:20-21). It is not eating and drinking, but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Romans 14:17). The church of our Lord is a

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