

## Trends

A 2014 poll shows American's religious views are increasingly influenced by humanism. Sixty-seven percent believe in heaven, but 45% say there are "many ways" to get there besides faith in Jesus. Only 53% believe salvation is in Christ alone, 41% say people who never heard of Christ will still go to heaven; 30% believe people will still have a chance for heaven after they die. Only 31% believe the Holy Spirit is a person, 19% believe Jesus was created by God, and 41% say the Bible is helpful but not literally true. Only 48% believe sex outside of marriage is wrong.

-via LifeWay Research

**Hebrews 13:4:** "Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge."

## Sentence Sermons

"I think it's time for the media and our leaders to get real and start telling the truth about the impact of adultery on our national life."

—Mike Pence, U.S. Vice President

**Job 31:11:** "For this [adultery] is an heinous crime; yea, it is an iniquity to be punished by the judges."

## News & Notes

Please pray for those mentioned in the announcements after services and others listed on the bulletin board in the foyer of the church building.

Pray that much fruit will come from the seed planted during our gospel meeting with Jesse Flowers. If you would like to contact Jesse his e-mail address is: [jafopie@hotmail.com](mailto:jafopie@hotmail.com).

Please pray for Susan Ferrell and her family as she continues to recover from a brain tumor. Her chemo treatment is completed and so far everything is clear! Please continue pray for her and her family.

Please pray for Alan Jones. He underwent deep brain stimulation to hopefully relieve severe facial pain. Alan held a gospel meeting for us in October 2014. He's been unable to preach for several months due to his affliction. Pray for him and his family.

Please keep sisters Virginia Brown and Wilma Cardwell in your prayers. Their faithfulness sets such a good example and gives encouragement to all! Ditto for Al (our Barnabas!).

Pray for Larry Haffley; his heart valve replacement surgery was a success!

Pray for the all of our students: elementary, secondary and college. Our young people face many temptations in today's school environment.

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**Times of Service:** Bible Study, Sunday 9:30 AM and Wednesday 7:00 PM; Worship, Sunday 10:30 AM and 5:00 PM

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Please direct questions and comments to the editor.

# Words of Life

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"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."

John 6:68



## Are there Christians in the Denominations?

Joe R. Price

This article will offend some people. That is not our intent. However, it happens whenever people love the darkness of error more than the light of truth (Jno. 3:19-21).

Denominations are not from God. Jesus built one church, which is His one body, "the fullness of Him who fills all in all" (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4). The gospel of Christ condemns religious division: Christ is not divided (Jno. 17:20-21; 1 Cor. 1:10-13). One is not following Jesus Christ when he practices what Jesus opposes. If God approves of denominations, we would find clear and convincing Scriptures approving them. We do not.

Christians are disciples of Jesus Christ (Acts 11:26). A disciple learns and follows the will of His Master—Jesus (Lk. 6:40). Since Jesus never taught, endorsed or encouraged denominationalism, one is not following Jesus when he engages in it; he is sinning (Col. 3:17).

Jesus adds saved people to His church, not to denominations (Acts 2:47). Christ does not count among the saved those who teach and practice the errors of denominationalism; the Lord knows those who are His (2 Tim. 2:16-19).

If there are saved people—Christians—in the denominations, then these conclusions follow:

**1) Denominations make the gospel plan of salvation unnecessary.** Denominations do not preach and practice the Bible plan of salvation (believe, confess faith, repent and be baptized, Mk. 16:15-16; Acts 2:37-38; 8:5, 12, 36-38; Rom. 10:9-10). If there are Christians in denominations then people can be saved without obeying the gospel (which is false, Matt. 7:21-23).

**2) Denominations make the church of Christ unnecessary.** The New Testament teaches the church is essential to God's eternal purpose of redemption (Eph. 3:10-11). God is glorified "in the church by Christ Jesus" (Eph. 3:21). Yet, the denominations say one can be saved without being a member of their denomination. True enough. Therefore, denominations admit they are not essential. When one is saved, the Lord adds him to His church, the blood-bought body of the redeemed (Acts 2:47; Eph. 5:23). The church of Christ is necessary.

**3) Denominations make contending for the faith futile and factious.** If

Christians are in denominations, should we not embrace them as brethren instead of contending against their error (Jude 3-4)? The error of "Christians in the denominations" silences the Bible call to contend for the faith, and to hold fast the pattern of sound words. Instead, we are told there are many faiths and God accepts them all (2 Tim. 1:13; Eph. 4:5).

**4) Denominations make fellowship with error acceptable.** The New Testament teaches Christians not to have fellowship with error (Eph. 5:11). To suggest that false churches practicing error contain saved people (Christians), is a denial of the verses that warn against having fellowship with error (2 Jno. 9-11; Gal. 1:6-10; 2 Cor. 6:14-18).

Are there Christians in the denominations of men? No. But, the gospel of Christ will save them (Rom. 1:16-17; Col. 2:8).

### **Jesus: "Public Enemy Number One"**

Larry Hafley

How do we explain the Jews' hatred of Jesus? What motivated them to kill him? If I had been a Jewish lawyer, here is the case I would have presented. (Let the reader understand that what follows is based upon the ignorance and envy of the day (Matt. 22:29; 27:18; Jn. 5:39). It is written from the view of one who, through the blindness, prejudice, and hypocrisy of his time, refused to honestly consider the claims and credentials of the Christ. With that being understood, here is the case I would have made.)

First, he is a pretender, a charlatan, a fake, a phony, a fraud. This is seen in three areas: (1) He has been accepted as one of our Rabbis, but he has no academic credentials (Jn. 3:2; Matt. 13:54). Have any of our legitimately learned men received him as their scholarly equal (Jn. 7:48)? (2) Though he has been extolled as a prophet, he refuses to accept the traditions we have received (Jn. 4:19; 7:40; Matt. 15:2; Mk. 7:2-5). Surely, no true prophet would do this! (3) Rumbblings have been heard to the effect that he is our king. Such a claim is absurd. If he were our king, why did he not accept the ordination and coronation of the people (Jn. 6:15)? Seeing that he is a "Rabbi" without a diploma, a "prophet" without respect for traditions, and a "king" without a throne, he is, therefore, to be rejected as a deceived deceiver (Jn. 7:12).

Second, he is a "rabble-rouser." He is a provoker, a malcontent, a disturber of the people. This, too, is seen in three areas: (1) **Morally**--He openly associates with immoral reprobates, causing consternation (Lk. 15:1, 2; 19:1-10). (2) **Politically**--By claiming kingship, he is a rival to Caesar, which brings tumult and turmoil upon our heads from the Romans. (3) **Spiritually**--He does not fast; rather he feasts! He has publicly violated the Sabbath. This confuses the people about their obligations to Moses' law. As Jews, we are the people of God, morally, politically, and spiritually; there is nothing else but this. Yet, this man continually causes upheaval by violating these vital areas which serve to define us as children of God!

Third, he undermines authority. No authority is sacred to this man! (1) **The Priests**--Who among us has not heard him publicly decry and deny the piety of our priests? He shows no respect whatsoever for those who attend to the work of God as outlined in the word of God. (2) **The Temple**--According to our law, we could have arrested him for his desecration of the temple precincts. Using violent, physical force, he has caused an uproar against those who serve in the temple (Matt. 21:12). We reserve judgment, at this

time, about his ludicrous and blasphemous comparison of himself to the temple (Matt. 12:6; Jn. 2:19-22). (3) **The Law**--He fancies that he is above Moses' law! He says that he is "Lord of the Sabbath" (Matt. 12:8). In all this he manifestly undermines authority by spurning its hold in every sacred sanctuary. If one desecrates and undermines the authority of the priests, the temple, and the law, what do we have left?

Fourth, his doctrine is heresy. He teaches: (1) That Elijah has come--Certainly, we all await the promise of Malachi i.e., that Elijah shall come, but to point to John the Baptist as fulfillment is ridiculous. (A) John himself denied that he was Elijah (Jn. 1:21). (B) John did not work miracles; Elijah did, so, how could John be Elijah (Jn. 10:41)? (C) Elijah protested against a wicked king; he did not project and protect him as lord (1 Kgs. 18:18). Yet, John the Baptist, contrary to the nature of Elijah, projected a coming king; hence, John did not fit the mold of Elijah. (2) That David will be king without being like himself--Imagine that! Yes, this Jesus says that David will indeed rule and reign, but that he will not do so as, or after the manner of, David. In other words, David will not be David! The prophets say that our Messiah, David, will smite his enemies, but this Jesus can only speak of an invisible kingdom with invisible weapons. Well, if so, we suppose he shall be satisfied with us as "invisible" subjects under his "invisible" scepter! To say David will come back as king without being a warrior is as silly as saying that Solomon will return as an ignorant pauper! (3) That all our doctrines and traditions are wrong--He dismisses our denominations, especially the Pharisees and Sadducees, and condemns all their sacred traditions (Matt. 15:8, 9; 16:12). Such arrogance! Such gall! Everyone is wrong but him (Matt. 7:13, 14, 21-23; 15:13, 14)! He thinks that just him and his little bunch are the only ones going to heaven!

*"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. 14 Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it."*

Matthew 7:13-14

Finally, we have shown that morally, politically, and spiritually this Jesus of Nazareth is an offense and affront to our nation. Accordingly, he must be removed. Even forgetting his blasphemous claims (which are the rantings of a mad man), that he is "equal with God" and that he is, in a special way, the Son of God--forgetting all that--is there any reason to spare him? No, the evidence is before you, and if you truly fear the God of Israel, the God of our fathers, you can return only one verdict that will sanctify our national soul, and that is the judgment of death. You can join in only one cry that will leave you justified, and that is, "Let him be crucified!"

**Addendum:** Hopefully, this article will provide insight into the Jewish mind of Jesus' day. Further, it is hoped that you will see the subtle tactics of error that were employed to condemn the Son of God. These same ploys and plots are employed by the enemies of our Lord until this day. With knowledge of the truth and a study of the Bible, you can answer the arguments of the Jewish lawyer as presented above. So, likewise, using the same diligence, with all readiness of mind, and by searching the Scriptures daily, you may avoid falling into the same snares of error today (Acts 17:11).