

JESUS CHRIST: THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE

14 ⁶Jesus said to him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, except by me. ⁷If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on, you do know him and have seen him. ⁸Philip said to him, Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied. ⁹Jesus replied, I have been with you for such a long time, and you still do not know me, Philip? He who has seen me, has seen the Father. How can you say, Show us the Father? ¹⁰Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak of my own accord; on the contrary, the Father dwelling in me is performing his works. ¹¹Believe me [when I say] that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or else believe me on account of the works themselves. ¹²I tell you the truth, he who believes in me shall also do the works I am doing. And he shall do [even] greater [works] than these, because I am going to the Father. (Jn. 14:6-12)

Introduction

A registered nurse moves her hands above a patient's body, she is seeking to manipulate what she has been taught is a cosmic force which permeates the universe. She is practicing the technique know as "therapeutic touch;" it is based upon an ancient Hindu doctrine. The nurse is seeking to tap into the "universal life energy" and channel it for the patient's benefit (*Christianity Today*, 5/16/86, p. 17.)

Companies are concerned with employee motivation; they seek peek productivity from their executives and salesmen, and there are seminars that promise to deliver. One such seminar is called "The Forum." "The Forum" promises to produce an extraordinary advantage in your personal effectiveness and a decisive edge in your ability to achieve. This particular seminar cost \$525 back in 1986 and requires a time commitment of two full weekends (from 9 a.m. to 11:30 p.m.) and an additional 3-hour evening session. What is the objective of all this instruction and time commitment? The objective is to get in touch with "being," the cosmic force that permeates the universe and resides within the human soul. "The Forum" has convinced businesses that their people will be more effective and productive once they get in touch with "being." (*Christianity Today*, 5/16/86, p. 21.)

The *New York Times* reported in its September 28, 1986, issue, "Representatives of some of the nation's largest corporations, including IBM, AT&T, and General Motors, met in New Mexico to discuss how metaphysics, the occult, and Hindu mysticism might help executives compete in the work marketplace."

At Stanford University's renowned Graduate School of Business, a seminar called "Creativity in Business" includes such topics as chanting, meditation, the use of tarot cards, and the "New Age Capitalist." Meanwhile, a recent survey of five hundred corporate presidents and company owners revealed that half had sponsored some type of New Age "consciousness raising technique" for their employees. (*Pioneer Magazine*, Sept./Oct., 1987.)

In 1983, the Broadway starlet, Shirley MacLaine, authored, *Out On A Limb*, relating her spiritual pilgrimage from being an agnostic to becoming a believer in the spirit realm; she reports that two spirits offered her their services as “tour guides.” In 1985 she authored, *Dancing In The Light*. In this book she tells of her advance to daily yoga exercises, the use of crystals to tap into supernatural power, and the chanting of Hindu mantras. In her first book she relates that the spirits told her that God is a great cosmic source of energy; in the second book she relates how the spirits told her that man is a part of this great cosmic energy.

In 1977 the box office sensation, *Star Wars*, made its debut. Was it a harmless science fiction adventure story? Not exactly. *Star Wars* offered a simplified introduction to a very ancient pagan religion presented in a futuristic setting. The hero is taught by an old prophet how to tap into the cosmic force that permeates the universe.

What was happening in late 20th century American society? What are the ideas and the influences to which Western society was being exposed and that it was embracing? The nurse, the business seminars, the starlet, the movie, all represent various aspects of a broad spiritual movement known as The New Age Movement—which in fact is a combination of eastern mysticism and the occult.

Back in the 1950s there were small pockets of such practitioners of eastern mysticism; they lived on the fringes of society in such out of the way places as New York’s Greenwich Village—they were often known as “Beatniks.” Then in the 1960s and ‘70s America underwent a cultural revolution; many of the young people of that generation turned way from traditional western values and the worldview based on the Bible, choosing to embrace eastern mysticism and the occult. America was introduced to “flower children,” psychedelic drugs, rock concerts, and a new religion, with the rock stars and bands becoming the “evangelists” of this new religion. A prominent example being the Beatles with their highly publicized visit to their Indian guru and the recording of the song, “*My Sweet Lord*,” (a hymn sung to the Indian god, Krishna.)

As the ‘70s gave way to the ‘80s, the “flower children” cut their hair, donned three-piece business suits, picked up their attaché cases and marched into the mainstream of society—and they brought their new religion with them:

The ancient wisdom made a similar transition, largely shorn of its overt spiritual overtones and assimilated in secularized forms. Theories, therapies, and practices based on the premises of the ancient wisdom have proliferated, and their scope has widened to include every major facet of contemporary culture: science, business, health, education, psychology, religion, politics, the arts, and entertainment. (*Christianity Today*, 5/16/86, p. 17)

Today this “new” religion is viewed by many as a possible answer to fill up the spiritual void created by the secular materialism of western culture.

Present day western culture is morally and spiritually bankrupt; there exists today a very deep hunger for spiritual life, meaning, identity, and contact with God:

After a stint at Berkeley, a Japanese professor believes that the “upheaval” in American morals is “basically a matter of religion” and “reflecting the weakening of the society’s Christian underpinnings.” Moreover, “there is no escaping the impression that a vast chasm yawns within the soul of the American people, a gnawing hunger that, to the outsider, is almost grotesque.” (*World Magazine*, 2/2/91, p. 15)

At times like these we need to be reminded of Jesus’ identity—especially as we live in a society that has lost sight of Christ and is groping in the midst of spiritual darkness. Because Jesus is the very Son of God, we need to look to Him for spiritual light and life.

I. Look to Jesus, Because Jesus is the Revelation of God the Father

The New Age Movement teaches the ancient pagan doctrine known as pantheism, which literally means, “everything is God.” This teaching makes no distinction between God and His creation (the world)—God is viewed as an impersonal cosmic force that permeates the universe. The teaching of the New Age Movement makes no distinction between God and His creature, man—man is viewed as being a part of this great cosmic force.

Pantheism has been humanity’s major preoccupation throughout history, as a former atheist who became a leading Christian thinker, C.S. Lewis observed, “it is the attitude into which the human mind automatically falls when left to itself. In the absence of revealed religion, humanity gravitates to natural religion, assumes nature is all that is, and deifies it and humanity accordingly” (*Christianity Today*, 5/16/86, p. 17.) In contrast to all of this teaching, there stands the Word of God that declares,

... although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²²Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools ²³and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles ... ²⁵They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen. (Rom. 1:21-23,25)

The New Age Movement teaches that by means of meditation one must seek to get into contact with and back into harmony with this great, universal cosmic force. Such teaching is not only erroneous, it can well prove to be dangerous. Consider the testimony of a young woman who became involved in the New Age Movement, especially its practice of transcendental meditation:

Then one day TM [transcendental meditation] became more than just relaxation. Mark and I began to have seemingly supernatural experiences. Several times we felt ourselves “leave” our bodies and saw ourselves from across the room. The first time it happened I was frightened enough to be startled out of meditation. But then I said to Mark, “That was neat. Let’s try it again.” Unknowingly I was playing with an evil force, possibly opening myself up to contact with demons. (*POWER*, 3/16/86, p. 6)

In contrast to all of this teaching, the Lord Jesus Christ declares, “*he who has seen me, has seen the Father*” (Jn. 14:9b.) We need not take a transcendental journey in the hopes of finding God, only to encounter demons. God Himself has come to us—in the flesh, in the Person of His one and only Son, Jesus Christ:

... an angel of the LORD appeared to him in a dream and said, Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins. ²²All this took place to fulfill what the LORD had said through the prophet, ²³The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel—which means, God with us. (Matt. 1:20-23)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God ... ¹⁴The Word became flesh, and lived [literally, tabernacled] among us. We saw his glory, his glory as the one and only [Son who came] from the Father, full of grace and truth ... ¹⁸No man has seen God at any time; the one and only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known. (Jn. 1:1,14,18), the Word is a title for the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God

Jesus declares, “*I am in the Father and the Father is in me*” (Jn. 14:10a.) There is a divine unity and oneness between God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. This divine unity was manifested when the Lord Jesus exercised His divine authority on the earth: His authority in teaching: “*The people were astonished at his teaching; because he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes*” (Mk. 1:22.) This divine unity was manifested when the Lord Jesus exercised His divine authority over demons:

And immediately there was a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an unclean spirit. He cried out, ²⁴What do we have to do with you, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God. ²⁵And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Keep quiet and come out of him. ²⁶And the unclean spirit, after shaking him violently and crying out with a loud voice, came out of him. ²⁷All the people were astonished, so much so that they questioned among themselves, saying, What is this? [Here is] a new teaching! With authority he even commands the unclean spirits, and they obey him. (Mk. 1:23-27)

This divine unity was manifested when the Lord Jesus exercised His divine authority over the natural world:

On that day when evening came, he said to them, Let us go over to the other side [of the lake]. ³⁶So leaving the crowd, they took him with them, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. ³⁷A fierce gale of wind came up [on the lake], and the waves began to break over the boat so much that the boat was now filling [with water]. ³⁸But he was in the stern, asleep on a cushion. They roused him and said, Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing? ³⁹He awoke and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, Peace, be still. The wind ceased and there was a great calm. ⁴⁰Then he said to them, Why are you afraid? Do you not yet have faith? ⁴¹Then they became exceedingly afraid and said to one another, Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him? (Mk. 4:35-41)

His divine unity with God the Father was manifested when the Lord Jesus exercised His divine authority over death itself:

Jesus, again groaning within himself, came to the tomb. Now it was a cave, with a stone laid against the entrance. ³⁹Jesus said, Remove the stone ... ⁴¹So they removed the stone. Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, Father, I thank you that you have heard me. ⁴²I knew that you always hear me; but I said it for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me. ⁴³After having said this, [Jesus] cried out in a loud voice, Lazarus, come out. ⁴⁴The one who was dead came out, wrapped hand and foot in grave clothes; and there was a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, Unwrap him, and let him go. (Jn. 11:38-39a, 41-44)

The Lord Jesus declares, *“The words that I speak to you I do not speak of my own accord; on the contrary, the Father dwelling in me is performing his works”* (Jn. 14:10b.) There is a divine revelation of God the Father that is given through the Person of Jesus Christ His Son—the Father has given Him the words to speak; He speaks the very word of God. Furthermore, these divine words are confirmed by the divine works that the Father Himself performed through Jesus Christ His Son; as the Apostle John testifies at the end of his gospel:

Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. ³¹But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. (Jn. 20:30-31)

Look to Jesus, because Jesus is the revelation of God the Father:

We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true. And we are in him who is true—in his Son

Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. ²¹Dear children, keep yourselves from idols. (1 Jn. 5:20-21)

II. Look to Jesus, Because Jesus is the Way to God the Father

The New Age Movement does not accept the doctrine of personal, moral sin. According to the New Age Movement, man's problem is not a matter of sin; it is a lack of knowledge. According to the New Age Movement, man's separation from God is not due to the fact that we have violated God's moral law; rather that separation is due to the fact that man has lost sight of his identity—he has lost sight of the fact that he is part of this great cosmic force known as "God."

With this as the definition of the problem, what is the solution proposed by the New Age Movement? According to its teaching, man does not need a savior who will make atonement for sin. What man needs is instruction as to how to get back into harmony with this cosmic force—how to get back into harmony with "being." Therefore, the New Age Movement teaches that there is the need for spiritual masters and guides to give enlightenment as to the way back to oneness with "cosmic being." According to its teaching, there are spiritual beings in the universe who are more spiritually advanced and in harmony with the cosmic being, these beings can render to men the service of giving instruction and guidance. Furthermore, according to New Age teaching, some men and women are able to serve as channels or mediums through which these spiritual beings can communicate their instruction and give their guidance. As is true of all religions, the New Age Movement calls for commitment: the New Age devotee is to "let go"—to surrender himself—to his spirit guide, allowing that spirit to lead and control his life.

In contrast to all of this teaching, the Lord Jesus Christ declares, *"I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life"* (Jn. 14:6a.) Jesus Christ Himself is the Way to God the Father. The Bible defines our problem as being moral defilement, the breaking of God's commandments and rebellion against God our Creator:

... your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear. ³Your hands are stained with blood, your fingers with guilt. Your lips have spoken lies, and your tongue mutters wicked things. ⁴No one calls for justice; no one pleads his case with integrity. They rely on empty arguments and speak lies; they conceive trouble and give birth to evil. (Isa. 59:2-4)

The Bible presents the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ as the only solution to our moral problem:

... he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are

healed. ⁶We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and Jehovah has laid on him the iniquity of us all. (Isa. 53:5-6)

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written, Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree. (Gal. 3:13)

Furthermore, Jesus Christ Himself is the Truth of God. He is the Truth of God, in opposition to all the false prophets and false messiahs, (whom Jesus warned would multiply in the days just prior to His return.) Jesus Himself is the Truth of God, in contrast to the shadows and remnants of the truth twisted by men in the religions of the world. The Lord Jesus is the ultimate prophet foretold by the LORD through Moses: *"I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers; I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him"* (Deut. 18:18.) Jesus is the ultimate prophet because He is the very Son of God Himself:

In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, ²but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. (Heb. 1:1-2)

No man has seen God at any time; the one and only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known. (Jn. 1:18)

Finally, Jesus Christ Himself is the Life of communion with God. As the very Son of God, Jesus is the Source and Giver of life, as He declares in John 5:26, *"just as the Father has life in himself, so also he has granted the Son to have life in himself."* True spiritual life and eternal life are found only in the Lord Jesus Christ: *"And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. ¹²He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life"* (1 Jn. 5:11-12.)

Conclusion

It should be noted that the New Age Movement is all-embracing: it views all religions as sharing the same basic beliefs and looks forward to the time when all the world religions will express their unity—all but one: Christianity. Today the New Age is a universal, open-armed religion that excludes from its ranks only those who believe in Jesus Christ and a personal God. Buddhists, Shintoists, Satanists, Secular Humanists, witches, witch doctors, and shamans—all who reject Christianity are invited to become trusted members of the New Age family (*Pioneer Magazine*, Sept./Oct. '87.)

In contrast to all of this teaching, the Lord Jesus Christ declares, *"I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life; and no one comes to the Father, except by me"* (Jn. 14:6.) Look to Jesus, because Jesus Himself is the way, the only way, to God the Father.

At times we need to be reminded of Jesus' identity, especially when we find ourselves living in the midst of a society that has lost sight of Christ and is groping in the midst of spiritual darkness. Because Jesus is the very Son of God, we must look to Him for spiritual light and life.