



WORLDVIEW MADE PRACTICAL
Volume 17 Number 44
November 23, 2022

What They Say about Jesus - Part 2

By Tal Davis

In 2013, TIME magazine published a list of the ten most influential persons (for good or bad) in world history. According to the magazine the list included the following (in descending order): 10 - Thomas Jefferson; 9 - Alexander the Great; 8 - Aristotle; 7 - Adolf Hitler; 6 - George Washington; 5 - Abraham Lincoln; 4 - William Shakespeare; 3 - Muhammad; and 2 - Napoleon. At the top of the list, as you probably guessed, was Jesus Christ.

That Jesus is number one is probably no surprise. Those of us who are Christians can think of no other individual who affected the world more than our Lord Jesus. But, as we indicated in the earlier installment of this two part series, most people in the world do not really understand just who Jesus was and what He did for mankind. In this article we are analyzing the beliefs of some of the largest world religions and pseudo-christian movements concerning what they teach about Jesus Christ. We began by presenting the Historic Christian beliefs about Jesus as taught in the New Testament Scriptures. We then reviewed how Jewish people, followers of traditional Judaism, generally regard Jesus. (To read Part 1 click here: <http://www.marketfaith.org/2022/11/what-they-say-about-jesus-part-1-tal-davis/>)

In this installment we will continue by examining what several other representative religious movements say they believe about Jesus. We begin with the world's second largest belief system.

Islam

The world religion of Islam was founded in AD 622 by an Arabian merchant named Muhammad (AD

570-632). He proclaimed that he was a prophet through whom the one true God (Arabic: *Allah*) revealed his final written revelation to mankind (the *Qur'an*). He then established a new and more correct monotheistic faith than ever before existed. Currently, approximately one and a half billion people around the world claim to be Muslims (followers of Islam).

According to Muhammad and Islam, Jesus was certainly not the incarnation of God nor the Son of God. Muslims regard it as blasphemy to say a man could be divine, or even to imply that God could possibly have a son: "*No son did God beget, nor is there any god along with him.*" (*Qur'an: Sura 23:91*) So they see Jesus as one of God's most important prophets, but less important than Muhammad.

Jesus is called Isa in the *Qur'an* where He is mentioned in 15 separate *Suras* (chapters). They believe Jesus actually did perform miracles, which they say were signs that Jesus came from *Allah*. They acknowledge that Muhammad performed no miracles. Strangely enough, Muslims also believe that Jesus was born of a virgin. "*And Mary the daughter of Imran, who guarded her chastity; and We breathed into (her body) of Our spirit; and she testified to the truth of the words of her Lord and of his Revelations, and was one of the devout (servants).*" (*Sura 66:12*).

Muslims, however, maintain that a true prophet of God could not have died in a violent way. So they say that God took Jesus from the cross and substituted Judas in His place, or at least someone who looked like Jesus. He was then taken to heaven where He is alive, and from where one day He will return. "*That they said (in boast), 'We killed Christ Jesus the son of Mary, the*

Permission to Reprint

If you wish to reprint this article in your own print or electronic newsletter, please include the following text:

*Reprinted from **Worldview Made Practical**; a free e-zine produced by **MarketFaith Ministries** featuring practical teaching and life tools to help Christians become more effective in their faith life. Discover **MarketFaith Ministries** at www.marketfaith.org.*

Speaking Schedule

If you are interested in having Freddy Davis or Tal Davis present one of our **Worldview Seminars** or to share about worldview and its practical implications at your church or organization, please contact **MarketFaith Ministries** to schedule your event. All contact information is at the bottom of this e-zine.

Worldview Resources

It is one of the primary purposes of **MarketFaith Ministries** to provide resources to help Christians understand the practical implications of worldview. You can find many free resources that will help you in your quest at <http://www.marketfaith.org>.

Apostle of Allah'; --But they killed him not, nor crucified him, but so it was made to appear to them, and those who differ therein are full of doubts, with no (certain) knowledge, but only conjecture to follow, for of a surety they killed him not." (Sura 4:157) Thus, since Jesus did actually not die, the question of His resurrection makes no sense to them. He could not, therefore, have been raised from the dead, and made no atonement for mankind's sin.

So Islam is a monotheistic faith, as are Judaism and Christianity. Nonetheless, its beliefs about Jesus Christ are totally out of line with historic Christian teaching and the New Testament.

Hinduism

Hinduism is the third largest religion, and the largest Far Eastern Thought worldview movement, in the world. Hindus claim approximately 900 million adherents worldwide, 90% of whom are in India. Historically, Hindus take no position about the person and work of Jesus Christ. He is not at all part of traditional Hinduism. Most educated Hindus today probably acknowledge Jesus as genuine historical figure, and some may regard him as a great guru (spiritual teacher). A few Hindus may regard Jesus as one of the thousands of appearances of one of the thousands of Hindu deities. Consequently, Jesus' death and resurrection are not even discussed. In summary, Jesus plays no part in the practices or beliefs of Hindus.

Buddhism

Buddhism is a world faith held by approximately 400 million people, mostly in China, Tibet, Japan, Korea, and other far eastern nations. It was founded by a 6th century BC Nepalese prince named Siddhartha Gautama (563-483 BC). He later

came to be called the Buddha (The Enlightened One).

Like Hindus, Buddhists historically take no position on who Jesus was or what He did. He is simply not part of traditional Buddhism. Some modern Buddhists may regard Jesus as a spiritual teacher who attained spiritual "enlightenment," but is less important than Buddha. His death and resurrection are not issues.

Unitarian Universalism

Unitarianism once had a prominent place in American history. It was deeply entrenched in certain parts of the United States, particularly the Northeast, since the nation's earliest days. Today only a remnant of what was American Unitarianism still exists in an organization officially called the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). The UUA is a coalition of affiliated churches which, in 2014, claimed 158,186 members in 1047 local congregations (down from 164,684 in 2009).

The word "Unitarian" describes the basic belief that God is a single unitary being and that the Trinity doctrine is false. That belief can be traced in ancient times to the teachings of Arius (AD 256-336), a pastor in Alexandria, Egypt. Arius taught that the Son was a created being and not equal to the Father. He argued that the Bible teaches that Jesus was not God and made no claims to deity. This Unitarian view was rejected as heretical by the Council of Nicea in AD 325.

After that, the Unitarian view remained dormant in church history until after the Protestant Reformation. Then, in the 16th century, theologians Michael Servetus (AD 1511-1553), in Spain, and Faustus Socinus (AD 1539-1604), in Poland, openly questioned the historic Trinitarian doctrine. Later, a Hungarian named Francis David (AD 1510-1579) led a movement that was the first to be labeled Unitarian. In

Subscription Information SUBSCRIPTION NOTICE:

A subscription to **Worldview Made Practical** is complementary for anyone interested in receiving it. If you received this email as a forward from a family member or a friend and wish to subscribe for yourself, you may do so at www.marketfaith.org. If you wish to unsubscribe from this newsletter, simply follow the instructions found at the bottom of each edition.

Contact Information

If you wish to contact us directly, you may do so by the following methods:

321 Anton Dr., Tallahassee, FL 32312

E-mail:

info@marketfaith.org

Phone: 850-383-9756 (Tallahassee, Florida)

Fax: 850-514-4571

You can order our products and examine our services at <http://www.marketfaith.org>.

This issue of **Worldview Made Practical** is a production of **MarketFaith Ministries**, © 2022. All rights reserved.

England, Unitarianism was led by John Biddle (AD 1615-1662), who attempted to disprove the Trinity from the Bible.

Unitarian churches were established in many places in the early United States. In the 20th century Unitarianism began to decline. In 1961, the American Unitarian Association of churches merged with a small movement called the Universalist Church of America. Together they formed the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). In this group, questions of theology and doctrine are normally avoided. More important is that a diversity of life-styles and beliefs is encouraged and welcomed. Unitarian Universalists who believe that Jesus actually lived (and many do not) regard Him to be merely a moral teacher or religious reformer. They generally reject any notion that He was a uniquely divinely inspired leader, and especially reject the claim that He was the incarnation of God.

Jehovah's Witnesses

In some ways, the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society (WBTS), better known by its generic name the Jehovah's Witness, has something in common with Unitarianism. This is especially true with regards to the person and work of Jesus Christ. This will be evident as we delve into what Jehovah's believe about Him.

First of all, Jehovah's Witnesses do believe that Jesus preexisted the creation of the world. However, He was *not* eternally preexistence, nor was He deity. In fact, they say He was actually Jehovah God's (the only God there is) first created being. In other words, Jesus had a beginning in time. In His pre-human existence, He was "The Word" or "Michael the Archangel." He did not create the universe, but helped Jehovah create all "other" things. This perspective is reflected in their mistranslations of several key biblical passages in the

WBTS' official Bible version the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures (NWT)*. Compare these verses to any other standard translation and see the obvious bias against the deity of Jesus. Especially notice the bolded words.

John 1:1 - In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was **a god.** (NWT)

John 8:58 - Jesus said to them: "Most truly I say to YOU, Before Abraham came into existence, **I have been.**" (NWT)

Colossians 1:15-17 - 15 He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; 16 because by means of him all **other** things were created in the heavens and on the earth, the things visible and the things invisible, whether they are thrones or lordships or governments or authorities. All **other** things have been created through him and for him. 17 Also, he is before all **other** things, and by means of him all **other** things were made to exist. (NWT) (Note: the highlighted word "**other**" in this NWT passage does not appear in any other translation or any ancient New Testament Greek manuscript.)

Jehovah's Witnesses nonetheless believe Jesus was a perfect man. They affirm He was conceived miraculously and born of a virgin. Then, Michael the Archangel's life force was transferred from heaven to His earthly body. Jesus was baptized at age 30 when He became the Messiah.

According to the WBTS, Jesus' earthly life had several purposes: to bear witness to the truth about Jehovah; to defeat Satan and prove he is a false god; to give His life as a "ransom sacrifice" to Jehovah. That theory of the atonement says: (1) a perfect man, Adam, sinned,

which required another perfect man as the sacrifice; (2) Jesus ("the Last Adam") was equal to First Adam; (3) by His death, Jesus cancelled the sin of the world so "the scales of justice" were balanced. Strangely, the Jehovah's Witnesses strongly insist that Jesus was not crucified on a cross but "impaled on a torture stake."

Jehovah's Witnesses assert that Jesus' resurrection was purely spiritual and not physical. He only appeared temporarily in physical form to the disciples and others. Thus, Jesus was given immortality and incorruptibility by Jehovah as a reward for His faithfulness. He now reigns in heaven where 144,000 of the best Jehovah's Witnesses will join Him. He will not return physically to earth, but will initiate the final battle of Armageddon to destroy evil and cleanse the earth for the rest of the resurrected Jehovah's Witnesses to inhabit forever.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Traditional Mormonism)

Perhaps no religious movement has presented itself in the last few decades more thoroughly as "Christian" than has the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS, also formerly known as the Mormons). That organization started in 1830 in New York with six members. It now claims more than seventeen million adherents worldwide, with about seven million in North America. It is by far the largest pseudo-Christian religious movement in the world. The reason we regard it that way is because its official theology (what we call traditional Mormonism) is incompatible with historic Christianity. A review of their beliefs about Jesus will make that clear.

According to the LDS, Jesus was the firstborn of billions of spirit children of Heavenly Father (an exalted physical human man named Elohim) and a Heavenly Mother in a preexistent spirit world. In that preexistent world, where all humans dwell prior to their earthly birth, Jesus was called Jehovah. Somehow Jehovah was able to attain godhood while still in the preexistence. He was eventually chosen by Heavenly Father to be born on earth as the literal physical offspring of Heavenly Father and Mary. So Jesus was the "first-born son of God" in the preexistence, and the "Only-begotten son of God" physically.

The reason for Him being sent to earth was because, according to the doctrines of the LDS, humankind lost its innate immortality when Adam and Eve fell in the Garden of Eden. Ironically, they regard the Fall as a good thing since, according to Mormonism, if Adam and Eve had not sinned they would have remained immortal. In that case, they could never have produced children and none of us would have ever been physically born. Why they could not have produced children if they had not sinned is not explained in LDS literature. It certainly does not come from the Bible. Nevertheless, it is taught in the extra-biblical Mormon scriptures and in their temple rituals.

So the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints teaches that Jesus restored immortality to mankind and guaranteed life after death for everyone by suffering in the Garden of Gethsemane, dying on the cross, and being raised from the dead. Thus Jesus "atoned" for Adam's "Necessary Fall" to restore immortality lost in the Fall for *all* humanity. Thus, Jesus' atonement was effectual for all people, whether they be Mormon, Christian, Hindu, Muslim, or even Atheist. In this sense, they are practical Universalists. Full salvation, however, in the Mormon system, requires

Would You Consider Supporting Us?

Would you consider financial support for **MarketFaith Ministries**? I feel confident that what we are doing is consistent with your beliefs about spreading the gospel and equipping the saints for ministry. Would you let us be one element of your hands and feet in this process? **MarketFaith Ministries** is a 501 (c) (3) not for profit corporation, so your contributions are tax deductible. If you would consider this we would be very grateful. Also, if you would like to know more about the ministry, it would be my pleasure to share with you personally what we are working on and how you can plug in. I can be reached at 850-383-9756 or by e-mail at Freddy@marketfaith.org. As for any donations, they may be sent directly to **MarketFaith Ministries** at 321 Anton Dr., Tallahassee, FL 32312, or you can contribute through our secure website at www.marketfaith.org. Simply click on the "Donate" button at the bottom of the homepage. We are deeply grateful for your support of this ministry.

And, as always, if you have any thoughts, opinions or suggestions about how **MarketFaith Ministries** can help you, please feel free, at any time, to call (850-383-9756) or e-mail (info@marketfaith.org). We are here to serve you.

performing an extensive series of unbiblical religious requirements in the church's temples, and being obedient to the church's teachings in one's personal life.

So we have now surveyed the beliefs of some of the world's largest religious groups concerning Jesus Christ. We could have included many more. This year, as we near the Christmas season, we need to be mindful of the full truth of who Jesus was and is (see part one) and why His birth matters. Perhaps we will have opportunities to interact with people from these or other faiths and can explain to them who Jesus Christ really was and why they all need to believe in Him as their Savior and Lord.