

Dear members and friends of St. John,

The story is told of an Early Church bishop who bowed respectfully before Emperor Theodosius but refused to bow to his son, Arcadius — at which the emperor, of course, showed great displeasure. But the Christian leader replied, "O King, how much more will Jehovah [God] abhor those who reject His Son!"¹

That's the central question for people of all religions, isn't it? Will you recognize the only Son of God? From St. John chapter 5, we have Jesus saying: *"The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears My word and believes Him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life"*(vv. 22-24, ESV).

There seems to be great confusion about Jesus and the need to recognize Him as God's own Son. **There are numerous church denominations that have publicly stated that Jews will also go to heaven because of their belief in the God of the Old Testament.** There are TV evangelists that publicly solicit funds to send Jews back to their homeland, Israel – implying that Jews have an inherent right to heaven, through their heritage (and that Jesus will return to Mt Zion when Israel is reestablished in Jerusalem - a false teaching). What does the Bible teach us? St. John chapter 5 is crystal clear. These are the simple and unmistakable words of Christ. Without Christ, there is no God. To be without Christ is to be lost, and on a "spiritual pathway" in this short life that leads to eternal death in hell.

I know that this message is distasteful to many Americans. It's embarrassing to all who in their ritual or worship would prefer to delete the name of Christ and be content with more general names for the Creator of all things.

Our Savior Jesus is no mere prophet, no mere teacher, no mere human leader. He is "very God of very God." He is the almighty Son of the Most High. Listen to these words from Colossians chapter 1: *"He [Jesus] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities— all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross"*(vv. 15-20, ESV).

I realize that political correctness has entered Christendom and has made the preeminence of Christ a reprehensible notion. However, we must understand this to be Satan's work to destroy the knowledge of the Truth, found in Jesus Christ alone.

As St. Paul states in Colossians, "For in Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell..." Jesus is fully and completely God. God was fully found in Him when Jesus hung on the cross, dying with the sins of all mankind.

We understand this truth by reading the next part of the text: "...and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things...making peace by the blood of His cross" (Col. 1:20, ESV). Jesus' death on the cross was an acceptable payment in the Father's eyes for the sins of the whole world. Jesus reconciles you and me to the Father, by shedding His blood on the cross. Our faith in Jesus, and Jesus alone, makes us right in God's eyes.

Finally, Jesus again reminds us of the truth, when He said, "*I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father, except through Me.*" (John 14:6). **Your friend or neighbor who believes that there are other ways to get to heaven, needs to hear these words.** Use this article, if necessary, to reach them today. Pray with them first, that they may receive the truth about God's only Son, to their eternal benefit. You may be the only person that ever confronts them with God's Truth.

Yes, the world finds the message of Jesus reprehensible. But we have the Truth, and we know the importance of sharing that truth with others who are lost. May God continue to use us for the good of His kingdom. Amen.

Pastor Travis

1. Hoyer, Theodore, et. al., *Meditations on the Gospels: According to His Word*, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c. 2009.