

“I did not come with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified” (1 Corinthians 2:1-2).

False Christianity Unmasked

The following (burgundy) letter challenges us to proclaim what, and more importantly, Whom we believe on. We do so in every series of *The Issues of Life*, and in every breath we take. We thank the Lord Jesus Christ for making Himself known to all given to see.

Akaid writes:

Hello Paul,

I wanted you to comment on the list of essentials that as Christians we must united on. The text below was copied from the Christian Research Institute (led by Hank Hanegraaff).

Paul replies:

Akaid, greetings in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thank you for the “list of essentials” you sent. It has afforded us a wonderful opportunity to come reason together. The authors of the list put forth a brief and straightforward point-by-point case for what they propose constitutes “essential” Christianity. There’s a problem, however. They’re giving us the recipe for roast chicken while leaving out the chicken. And it isn’t even a matter of forgetfulness. They assume they have the chicken when they don’t. I’ll show you how and why this is the case, as I continue my reply within the letter below.

List from CRI:

Essential Christianity. We hear a lot of discussion about essentials and non-essentials, but what are the essentials of Christianity?

When we talk about the essentials of Christianity we’re referring to the basic elements that make up and characterize our faith, and which, of course, separate it from other beliefs. Let’s survey these doctrines.

First, we believe in the authority of Scripture, which is another way of saying that the Bible is God’s inspired, infallible, and inerrant Word. It’s the ultimate source for knowledge about God, as well as the definitive guide for our daily lives.

Paul: Certainly, the Bible is the ultimate *written* source of information about God and Jesus Christ, but the “ultimate source” in itself? What about Jesus Christ, Who is the Express Image of God? Is He not the Ultimate Source? By Him, the Scriptures say, all things were made, and by Him they consist. He, it’s declared, is the Light of all men. He (not the Bible) shows us the invisible Father. He’s both Alpha and Omega. It’s not to the Bible the Father draws us, but to the Son, says the Bible. Nowhere has it been said in the Bible, that the Bible is the ultimate source for knowledge about God.

Is it profitable for reproof, doctrine, correction, and instruction in righteousness? Yes indeed. But the testimony of the Bible points to the Lord Himself as the Ultimate Source. The inspiration and understanding of the Bible is given by Him. How then is the Bible the ultimate source of knowledge about God? Does it know more than He does? Can it do more than He can? Did the Bible come and lay down its life for us?

Has not the Lord Jesus addressed this already?

“Search the Scriptures; for in them you think you have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me. And you will not come to Me, that you might have life. I receive not honour from men. But I know you, that you have not the love of God in you. I am come in My Father’s Name, and you receive Me not: if another shall come in his own name, him you will receive. How can you believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that comes from God only?” (John 5:39-44)

There’s good reason men make the Bible the arbiter of final resort, and the Lord has just given you that reason. It’s because men seek honor of one another rather than of Him. They seek this honor because they prefer to live to themselves, rather than submit to God. They love the Bible alright, but as eating from the Tree of Knowledge, while rejecting the Tree of Life.

Declaring the Bible to be the “ultimate source” implies supremacy over God, and allows every man to keep his own interpretation of the Bible and thereby maintain his own righteousness. “See, it says it right here, ‘No prophet is born in Galilee,’” said the Pharisees. Those maintaining their own righteousness don’t rightly divide and apply the Word of God. They worship the Bible instead, which is called “Bibliolatry.”

When people, whether individually or in groups such as denominations, decide for themselves what God means, Who He is, and what He’s like, they do so by following their own lusts and rejecting the living Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord manifests Himself both then and now by speaking to His sheep, which *hear*, not *read*, His voice. He personally makes Himself and His will known.

While vaulting the Bible to Numero Uno seems to be giving glory and honor to God, it is, in truth, a direct denial of the Lord Jesus Christ. It denies He comes in the flesh, which is the doctrine that John, the beloved apostle, said alone determines whether

you receive one into your house as Christ's. (Will you receive the counsel of God by Scripture here, Akaid?)

Some think the doctrine of confessing Christ "is come" in the flesh means one acknowledges that Christ lived as a man, died, and was resurrected. This explanation fails totally. We know many false professors of Christ will gladly and sincerely acknowledge these things, yet have nothing to do with Him, which is seen by their fruits. What the unbeliever, and what the tares, will not do, however, is acknowledge the authority of Christ, as He is present in a believer. That is Jesus Christ come in the flesh. That's what He meant when He said that those who receive His messengers receive Him, and those who receive Him receive the Father (Matthew 10:40).

Because the religious, such as the writers of this CRI document, don't know the Lord personally themselves, or I should say that the Lord doesn't know them, they resort to giving themselves a position of spiritual authority on the basis of the "authority" of the Scriptures, which Scriptures they interpret as they see fit. Let's face it, unless the Lord does a miracle, the Bible won't jump up and rebuke anyone. It sits there passively and will be made what men choose to make of it. That the Bible is a dead book to the dead is a well-known fact.

The writers of this list are no different from those the Lord rebuked:

"Search the Scriptures; for in them you think you have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me. And you will not come to Me, that you might have life" (John 5:39-40).

Calling the Bible the definitive guide for our daily lives sounds nice, but it's off the mark. Are the Scriptures all true, and applicable to our lives? Yes. Anyone who doesn't think so will find out differently. However, we don't follow a book, but God. If we, the saints, are dependent on a book, we could ask ourselves how Abraham knew what to do, or Noah, or Moses, none of whom had a Bible.

The Bible confirms the truth, and teaches truth, but it isn't God. *Christ* led the children of Israel in the wilderness, not the Bible. He doesn't change, and does the same today. Calling the Bible the "ultimate source," which is considered by many a godly thing to do, is nothing less than making an idol of the Bible. Men are in worship of the Bible, not because they serve God, but because they serve themselves.

CRI: Next we affirm the existence of a triune God or one God in three distinct persons - the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This God is self-existent, eternal, unchanging, omnipotent, omnipresent, holy, righteous, and loving. God created the universe from nothing and He rules over His creation sovereignly including both human and angelic beings.

Paul: There's only one God, not three persons. Please read [Diabolical Doctrine: The Trinity \(God Is Three Persons\)](#).

What of the seven Spirits of God? Would that not make nine distinct entities (including the Father and the Son)? It's a fool's errand for men to describe the ineffable God by carnal reasoning. What audacity!

Where God is truly manifested is in Christ. Christ was God (YHWH or Yahweh) come in the flesh. That's the way He shows us His character, and makes known what He wills for us. The revelation of Jesus Christ by the Spirit of God is the foundation of the true Church (Matthew 16:16-18). See our section [Jesus Christ Is God](#).

To acknowledge the living Christ as God is anathema to the carnal man, especially the religious one, who won't be told what to do by God because he has already seated himself on God's throne.

“Let not anyone deceive you by any means. For that Day shall not come unless there first comes a falling away, and the man of sin shall be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, setting himself forth, that he is God” (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4).

And did God create the universe from nothing? Nowhere in Scripture does it say so. In fact, it says otherwise:

“For the unseen things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being realized by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, for them to be without excuse” (Romans 1:20).

“By faith we understand that the universe was prepared by the Word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are invisible” (Hebrews 11:3).

Invisible is not equivalent to *non-existent*. The word itself implies substance. According to the authors of this list, and their erroneous assertion here, faith would also be the evidence of *nothing*, rather than of *things unseen*. That's because there's nothing behind their faith. They don't have the Substance themselves, not knowing Him Who is *invisible*.

The list of “essentials of Christianity” continues:

We also hold that man is a physical and spiritual being who is created in God's image. But because of his sin or transgression, man has lost his fellowship with God. The extent of sin is so great that its effects continue to this very day in the form of cruelty, suffering, and death.

Paul: True, and what is the nature of sin? It is the spirit of independence, which says to God, “Don't you tell me what to do! I know better.” The religious aren't teaching others to sin in blatant ways, but rather are teaching, by example, that one can remain independent of God while professing Him. This independent nature is the

cause of all that leads to death. That's also why God lays the carnage of death in this world, past or present, at the feet of the religious.

“And in her [[Mystery Babylon, or man's religious systems](#)] was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all those who were slain on the earth” (Revelation 18:24).

What is being taught by the religious professors is essentially manmade, a self-serving and self-exalting version of Christianity. They come together to strengthen their position. And those in agreement with their doctrines are now justified, given a free ticket to Heaven, and able to live for themselves with virtual impunity. This causes others to blaspheme the Name of God, as they see the hypocrisy and self-righteousness. Rather than being confronted on their sin nature, they're increasingly emboldened in it.

CRI: By God's grace, Jesus Christ - Who is fully God and fully man - was sent to save us from our bondage to sin. We believe that Christ was born of a virgin, died for our sins, physically rose from the dead, and will one day return to judge the world and deliver His people. Faith in Christ is the only means by which mankind can escape eternal damnation and judgment.

Paul: These things are true, until the words “will one day return.” How convenient for men that judgment is put off until the future! However, judgment has already begun. It begins *with* the house of God.

“For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?” (1 Peter 4:17)

Deliverance has also come; it's the result of judgment:

“But being judged, we are corrected by the Lord, that we not be condemned with the world” (1 Corinthians 11:32).

Judgment isn't meant to be escaped; it's meant to be applied for our good, so we're delivered from evil, as all others will be when they're judged. By His judgment, God will deliver everyone. Of Christ it's written:

“Behold My Servant, Whom I have chosen; My Beloved, in Whom my soul is well pleased: I will put My Spirit upon Him, and He shall show judgment to the Gentiles” (Matthew 12:18 KJV).

“For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but so that the world might be saved through Him” (John 3:17).

The Scriptures tell us the purpose of judgment, and the will of God:

“And, O man, the one judging those practicing such things, and doing them, do you think that you will escape the judgment of God? Or do you despise the riches of His kindness, and the forbearance and the long-suffering, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?” (Romans 2:3-4)

“The Lord is not slow concerning His promise, as some count slowness, but is long-suffering toward us, not purposing that any should perish, but that **ALL** should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9).

Read these writings, Akaid. Hear the victory of the Lord Jesus Christ; believe the Almighty Power of His Resurrection and the Absolute Sovereignty of His Will. Give the glory to God that is due His Name.

[The Reconciliation of All Things](#) [The Good News](#)

CRI: Finally, we recognize the church as God’s ordained institution headed by Christ. The church is composed of all believers, and is organized for worship, for fellowship, for the administration of the sacraments, for spiritual growth and support, and for evangelizing the world.

Do they truly recognize the Church as God’s ordained institution headed by Christ? Which church? How do they know who’s a believer and who isn’t? By these criteria, which are proven faulty? What they’re saying here is no different from saying the Bible is the ultimate authority, inasmuch as this is also according to their understanding and say-so. But we know that neither the inspiration of Scripture nor the interpretation is a private matter.

“Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Peter 1:20-21).

Sacraments, what are those? Defined by whom? Read about [the “Lord’s Supper”](#) and [water baptism](#) here, also contrasted with [the baptism in the Holy Spirit](#).

Who determines who is sent to evangelize, disciple, and make holy? Will the authors of this list recognize God’s ordained Body? Send them this letter and we will see.

CRI: Much more can and will be said, but we hope this summary has encouraged you to continue studying Christian doctrine.

Regards,

Akaid

Paul: This has encouraged me to contend for the true faith of Jesus Christ. For that I'm thankful. I pray this answer will encourage you to pursue the same, Akaid. You need to come away from manmade religion, which poisons. Ask the Lord for a love of the truth, or you'll be destroyed in your own righteousness.

Paul Cohen

[Prophecy to All Religious](#)

[Our Testimonies](#) | [What's New?](#) | [Notice Board](#) | [Teachings](#) | [Falsehood Exposed](#) | [False Teachers](#)
[The Issues of Life](#) | [Blog Wars](#) | [Proverbs](#) | [Poems](#) | [Music](#) | [Home](#)

[Statement of Doctrine](#) [Site Map](#)

[How We Use the Scriptures](#) | [Copying & Linking](#) | [How One Is Saved](#)

[Healthy Living Advice in Everyday Things](#)