

Here a "Christ," There a "Christ," Everywhere a "Christ-Christ"!

What would Jesus think (WWJT) about "the shift" to christ-consciousness?

Throughout this inter-advent age--the time between Jesus' Incarnation and Second Coming, or Parousia--Jesus and John warned that false prophets would arise preaching the doctrine of *replacement christs* (Matthew 24:5, 23-24; 1 John 2:18). As Jesus' coming draws nearer, and as pictured by the image of Messiah's birth pangs, we can expect that oracular announcements of anti-christs by the false prophets will multiply and proliferate. Some of these false messiahs will even work deceptive "**signs and wonders**" (Mark 13:8, 21-22). During this age Jesus warned:

"Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not" (Matthew 24:23-26, KJV).

There can be no greater proliferation of the anti-christ doctrine than belief systems which teach everybody's a christ. Among a host of others, Eckhart Tolle, bestselling author whose writings Oprah Winfrey highly recommends, teaches that all humanity is indwelt by an immanent christ-spirit. He has stated: "Jesus speaks of the innermost I am, the essence identity of every man and woman . . . Some Christian mystics have called it the Christ within . . ." [1] In an earlier writing, he also stated: "In you, as in each human being, there is a consciousness far deeper than thought. It is the very essence of who you are. . . . it is the Christ within, or your Buddha nature." [2] Statements like Tolle's are all over the Internet. Everybody's a christ--they just haven't realized it. To experience "christness," New Age prophets tell us that a shift in consciousness is needed. So we ask, what would Jesus think (WWJT) about such teaching? Before attending to "WWJT," we should know something of the overall New Testament presentation of Christ.

In contrast to the plethora of christs advocated by proponents of mystical spirituality, Peter designated, and John affirmed, that Jesus is "**the Christ, the Son of the living God**" (Emphasis mine, Matthew 16:16; Compare 1 John 2:22-23; 5:1.) [3] The one God has one Son, and the one Son is the one Christ. There can be no other "christs"! Jesus is as John says, "**the only begotten from the Father**" (John 1:14,18; 3:16, 18; See Hebrews 11:17; 1 John 4:9.), and "**only begotten**" (Greek, *monogenes*) means "unique, only one of His kind" (Compare Philippians 2:9-11.).

Given the Gnosticism, Immanentism, and Messianism of the new spirituality of the New Age [4], Christ's prophetic warning becomes relevant. He stated, "**Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not**" (Matthew 24:26). Jesus warned His disciples not to look for the Messiah in two

places: either "**in the desert**" or "**in the secret chambers.**" So in light of the popular rise of mystic religion in America during the last half-century, and when compared to the Bible's teaching there's but "one" Christ, the two places where Jesus predicted Christ could not be found become very interesting.

First, disciples are not to think that Christ is hidden somewhere in "**the desert.**" He will not be found, or experienced, by engaging the disciplines, solitude, and silence of ascetic monks who choose, like the Essenes and Desert Fathers, to separate themselves from the corrupting and distracting influences of a worldly civilization and church. Christ will not be found in some personal-mystical experience in a barren desert. Jesus Christ told His disciples, *Don't look for Me there.*

Second, He, that is the Christ, will not be discovered in "**the secret chambers.**" The two words in the English Bible, translated "**secret chambers**" (KJV and ASV) or "**inner rooms**" (NASB, NIV, NKJV, and NRSV), are one word in the Greek text (*tameiois*). In the New Testament the word is rare (See Matthew 6:6; Luke 12:3.) As a plural noun, the word literally reads, *the secrets*. So we can understand Jesus to have warned the disciples: Don't believe it when the false prophets tell you, "*Look, Christ is in the secrets!*" (Matthew 24:26). About "the secrets," one scholar wrote that Jesus was warning people that false prophets would attempt to lead them astray by, "claiming that they [i.e. the false prophets] have special knowledge; whereas ordinary people do not know where the Messiah is, they do. If people will only trust them, they will lead them to him." [5] Thus, we can see that Jesus' warning is relevant to the spiritual gnosticism (i.e., *knowing*) which advocates that there resides a secret christ within, "far deeper than thought," as Tolle puts it, awaiting the awakening of the new consciousness.

These days, many peddle a secret Jesus lost in history and shrouded in mystery. This christ, the popular notion goes, is waiting to be revealed, exposed, and unwrapped via some new historical evidence, innovative spiritual program, or radical shift of consciousness. Of such consciousness, Eckhart Tolle also wrote:

The "second coming" of Christ is a transformation of human consciousness, a shift from time to presence, from thinking to pure consciousness, not the arrival of some man or woman. If "Christ" were to return tomorrow in some externalized form, what could he or she say to you other than this: "I am the Truth. I am divine presence. I am eternal life. I am within you. I am here. I am now." [6]

Guess what? Jesus tells us that we won't find Christ "in the secrets." Messiah is not mentalist. By human imagining, He cannot be reproduced over and over and over again in billions of human minds and hearts. About the deception that Christ can be found in the secret recesses of human consciousness, Jesus says, *Don't you believe it!* As He first warned in His prophetic sermon, "**Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many**" (Matthew 24-4b-5).

The Messiah's coming was not, is not, and will not be secreted. Rather, in contradiction to Tolle's dictum, His coming will be "externalized." [7] His coming will not be realized by internally

developing a consensus of christ-consciousness on earth below. But as described by the apostle John, Christ will come externally from heaven above. **"Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him"** (Revelation 1:7). The Christ will come openly and publicly for all to see, and this after true believers have already met **"the Lord in the air"** (1 Thessalonians 4:17). So in the meantime, and as ordered by Jesus, *believers are not to go about looking for Christ in deserts or secrets.*

ENDNOTES

[1] Eckhart Tolle, *A New Earth: Awakening to Your Life's Purpose* (New York: Penguin Group, 2005): 71.

[2] Eckhart Tolle, *Stillness Speaks* (Novato, California: New World Library, 2003): 13.

[3] The New Testament refers to Jesus as "the" Christ (Matthew 16:16; 1 John 2:22-23; 5:1). The definite article, translated "the," carries with it a "monadic" meaning; that is, "The article is frequently used to identify . . . one-of-a-kind nouns, such as 'the devil,' 'the sun,' 'the Christ'." See Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996): 223.

[4] In order, I define these words: **Gnosticism** means that the initiated come to know God by obtaining "secret knowledge"; **Immanentism** means that God is "in" nature, and as such, a divine "christ spirit" indwells all of humanity; and **Messianism** means that out of humanity many christs have and will come, and, perhaps one day out of the christ-conglomerate, a new super-christ will arise.

[5] Leon Morris, *The Gospel according to Matthew* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1992): 607. Another confirms that underlying Jesus' warning may be "the notion that the Messiah would at first be only secretly present." See Donald A. Hagner, *Word Biblical Commentary, Matthew 14-28, Volume 33B* (Dallas: Word Books, Publisher, 1995): 706.

[6] Eckhart Tolle, *The Power of Now: A Guide to Spiritual Enlightenment* (Novato, California: New World Library, 1999): 105.

[7] Any denial that Christ's Second Coming will not be "externalized" in the future blends in with the gnostic belief that His First Coming was not really physical and personal, that He just seemed to appear human (i.e., Docetism). Responding to this heresy, the apostle John wrote of Christ's real incarnation: "Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world" (1 John 4:2-3, KJV; Compare John 1:14; 1 John 1:1.).