

Guilty of Preaching Christ

1 Corinthians 2:2

“I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.”

Every preacher should ask himself this question: “If I were on trial for preaching Christ, would there be enough evidence to convict me?”

Jesus Christ assures His ministers that such trials are coming. He tells them that “they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before kings and rulers for My name’s sake. But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony” (Luke 21:12-13; cp. Mark 13:9; Matthew 10:16-18; 23:34). Examples of this from the Apostolic Era are found in The Acts of the Apostles (e.g., 5:25ff; 16:20-24). The same has continued from that time, for Antichrist’s Babylon is “drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs [witnesses] of Jesus” (Revelation 17:6; cp. 18:20, 24).

So, what happens when today’s ministers claiming to preach Christ are on trial facing that charge? Suppose all professing ministers of Christ and preachers of His gospel are brought to trial before Antichrist. How many would be convicted by the evidence?

Now comes the first defendant, whose name is *Incidental Mentioner*. Antichrist tells him, “Sir, Jesus Christ says the Scriptures testify of Him (John 5:39). One would therefore expect a preacher of Christ to follow His example when ‘beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself’ (Luke 24:27). But when you expound Scriptures and explain their doctrines, you only incidentally mention Him, and often do not mention Him at all. I therefore find nothing in your preaching that greatly offends me. You are no threat to me. I therefore release you.”

Now comes the second defendant, whose name is *Ecumenical Facilitator*. Antichrist tells him, “Sir, Jesus Christ says He is the only way to the Father in heaven (John 14:6). The Holy Spirit says Christ is the only Mediator between God and men (1 Timothy 2:5). Christ’s preachers declare salvation is in Christ’s name and in none other (Acts 4:12). But I find you willing to compromise everything you claim to believe in order to cooperate with other religions, for you find much in them that is agreeable with your own. I release you, for compromisers like you are useful pawns for me.”

Now comes the third defendant, whose name is *Political Activist*. Antichrist tells him, “Sir, we know that Jesus Christ and His apostles did not identify with a political party nor engage in political activism. And we know that political activists opposed Him to His death. And we know that you assume the title “Reverend” and dress yourself in religious garb only to lend credibility to your political cause in the eyes of the gullible. Believe me, sir, no sensible person mistakes you for a preacher of Christ. I am looking for the man who shuns worldly politics and preaches Jesus Christ. You

definitely are not that man. You may go. And feel free to let me speak in your next political function.”

Now comes the fourth defendant, whose name is *Moral Reformer*. Antichrist says to him, “Sir, Jesus Christ preached that the inward part of men must be cleansed before their outward part can be cleansed (Matthew 23:25f), and that this inward cleansing is done only by His own blood (Revelation 1:5). He also describes your sort as ‘whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness’, and says ‘you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness’ (Matthew 23:27f). I have no objection to the Christ you preach, for you present Him as but a good moral example for immoral people to emulate when they want to reform themselves. And as long as they think they have sufficiently reformed themselves in God’s eyes, they will not view themselves as degenerate sinners in need of Christ to be their Lord and Savior. You are free to go – and feel free to include me among the speakers at your next moral crusade or seminar.”

Now comes the fifth defendant, whose name is *Sanctimonious Legalist*. Antichrist says to him, “Sir, Christ’s preachers declare ‘Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes’ (Romans 10:4). One of them, formerly an eminent lawyer in your legal practice, says of your sort that ‘they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God’ (Romans 10:3). Thank you for encouraging men to produce self-righteousness instead of looking to Christ for divine righteousness. You also may go. And I want you to know you look sharp in your holier-than-thou attitude and robe of filthy rags.”

Now comes the sixth defendant, whose name is *Sabbath Enforcer*. Antichrist says to him, “Sir, Jesus Christ says that if the weary and heavy-laden come to Him He will give to them rest for their souls (Matthew 11:28f). His Holy Spirit says that when men do so, they enter into Christ’s Sabbath (Hebrews 4:1-11). And He tells them that they must afterward refuse to be judged by Sabbatarians because Christ is the true Sabbath (Colossians 2:16f). But you deny all this – so convincingly that your followers refuse spiritual rest in Christ for physical rest in some day of the week. Such a rejecter of Christ cannot be a preacher of Christ. You are free to go. And give my regards to your father Sanctimonious Legalist.

Now comes the seventh defendant, whose name is *Free Willer*. Antichrist says, “Sir, you say your Christ is doing all it can to save sinners, but that it is helpless to do so unless they of their ‘free will’ let it do so. You say your Christ made atonement for all people without exception, but that its atonement is worthless unless they of their ‘free will’ make it so. Your pathetic Christ is therefore not the omnipotent Jehovah who says ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure’ (Isaiah 46:10). Furthermore, it is documented in John 6:60-66 that your sort deserted Jesus Christ when He exposed the inability of your ‘free will’ and declared your

need of God's sovereign grace. I am not all concerned about the Christ you preach. You are free to go, for I take special delight in you."

Now comes the eighth defendant, whose name is *Baptismal Salvationist*. Antichrist says to him, "Sir, Christ's preachers exhort sinners to 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved' (Acts 16:31). But you say, 'Not true, because the believer in Christ is not saved until he is baptized.' Christ's preachers declare baptism is 'the answer of a good conscience toward God' (1 Peter 3:21). But you say, 'Not true, because baptism is the means of obtaining a good conscience toward God.' Christ's preachers teach that 'Jesus Christ ... washed us from our sins in His own blood' (Revelation 1:5). But you say, 'Not true, for sinners are yet unwashed from their sins until they are baptized.' Jesus Christ says the regeneration of sinners is the work of the Holy Spirit (John 3:5-8). But you say, 'Not true, because men are not born again until I baptize them.' You give a whole lot of lip-service to Christ, but you say nothing that would make you guilty of preaching Christ.

Now comes the ninth defendant, whose name is *Proud Sectarian*. Antichrist tells him, "Sir, everyone here knows you also only gave lip service to Christ. Your real passion is exalting your church over all others, and exalting your ecclesiastical creeds and confessions and traditions over God's Word, and exalting your 'true church' over Christ the Truth. You also are free to go – and Godspeed!"

Now comes the tenth defendant, whose name is *Self Preacher*. Before Antichrist can address him, he says, "Sir, I am the Archbishop of all who will say, 'We preach ourselves, not Christ Jesus the Lord' (2 Corinthians 4:5, Revised Standard Perversion). You have found fault with none of them thus far, and the same would be true of the rest of their number, including Arminian Soul-winner, Altar Caller, Charismatic Confuser, and all the rest. All these ministers are from manmade religion, not the church of Christ, and none of them is the preacher of Christ you seek. They all are what you sent them to be: 'false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ, ... Satan's ministers who transform themselves into ministers of righteousness' (2 Corinthians 11:13-15). The man you seek is the one who preaches Jesus Christ always and only, from all the Scriptures, and says these other defendants preach 'another Jesus' and 'a different gospel' than the Jesus and gospel he preaches (2 Corinthians 11:4). The man you seek is the one who dares to say, 'We do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord' (2 Corinthians 4:5)."

"Where is he?" thunders Antichrist!

All the above-cited defendants point their fingers to that man and shout in unison, "There he is! His name is *Gospel Preacher!*"

Antichrist then says, "Gospel Preacher, I call you to the stand! What is your defense?"

I hope all the other professing ministers have pointed to me – and to your minister.

This would be my testimony: "Sir, as Paul the apostle says, 'I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified' (1 Corinthians 2:2).

"I have no desire to know what those other defendants know. It suffices me to know that no man was ever saved through what they preach, and that the Lake of Fire will be thickly populated by their sort. Jesus Christ Himself said of them, 'Not everyone who says to Me, "Lord, Lord," shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?" And then I will declare to them, "I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!"' (Matthew 7:21-23).

"Contrary to them, I preach 'Jesus Christ and Him crucified!'

"'Jesus' is His *name*, 'for He will save His people from their sins' (Matthew 1:21). 'His people' are all whom His Father chose in Him unto salvation before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:3-6; 2 Thessalonians 2:13f), and gave unto Him for their safe-keeping. Jesus Christ declares that He has indeed saved every one of them, and that none of them will be lost (John 17:1-12). Truly He is rightly named *Jehovah Is Salvation*.

"'Christ' is His *title* and *office*, for He is the One Jehovah anointed to be King of the nations and to bring them under subjection to Him (Psalm 2:1-9). He has sent me to tell you 'therefore, be wise, O kings; be instructed, you judges of the earth. Serve Jehovah with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish in the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him' (vv.10-12).

"'Crucified' is the means by which Jesus Christ has accomplished God's eternal purpose for the salvation of His people. The sins of His people were laid upon Him, and on Calvary's cross He suffered and died in their place and stead to redeem them unto God (Isaiah 53). Jesus Christ succeeded in saving all His people. For He shouted in glorious victory with His dying breath 'It is finished!' (John 19:30).

"Now, sir, I realize that 'the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing [as the other defendants have amply proven], but to us who are being saved it is the power of God' (1 Corinthians 1:18). Therefore, 'I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.' And since I am on trial for preaching Christ, I hope I have presented enough evidence for you to find me guilty."

And I hope, my friend, you believe the message of this Gospel Preacher as he declares the good news of "Jesus Christ and Him crucified".

– Daniel E. Parks