

Real Change You Can Believe In: Changing Misconceptions  
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Introduction:

There are a lot of common misconceptions out there. This week I read about just a few I'd like to mention:

French fries probably were not created in France. They originated in Belgium. The name comes from the cooking term "to french" which means to cut food into strips, hence they are "frenched and fried".

Here's another one: Thomas Edison did not invent the light bulb, and Henry Ford did not invent the automobile or the internal combustion engine. In both cases, their contributions were in the area of improving and popularizing the devices in question. For example, Ford introduced the assembly line, and used it to bring the cost of automobiles into reach of many more people, and Thomas Edison refined the internal gases and filaments, making a bulb last longer.

The phrase "separation of church and state" does not occur in the U.S. Constitution, nor in the Declaration of Independence. It was written by Thomas Jefferson in a letter at a later time.

How about this one, some of you may have believed Adam & Eve ate an apple, but nowhere in the Bible is the fruit eaten by Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden referred to as an apple. The fruit is called the "Fruit of the Knowledge of Good and Evil" (from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil) and not identified as a known species. In Middle English, however, apple was a generic term for all fruit, other than berries but including nuts, as late as the 17th century

Here's one I had until recent weeks:

I thought a "turkey shoot" was a thing where they released a turkey and everybody started shooting at it, and the one who shot it the most before it flopped over dead was the winner.... It was sort of a letdown when I learned that all they really do is shoot at a paper target and the winner gets a frozen turkey....

What misconceptions have you had over the years?

Misconceptions about your parents

When you were young you may have thought your parents knew EVERYTHING, and as a teenager you decided your parents didn't know anything. Then maybe as you matured as an adult you realized more and more how much they did and do know.

Misconceptions about Marriage.

- When you were first married, did you think that your wife would cook all your meals, clean all your clothes, pick up after you like your mother did.

Misconceptions about Church

- A lot of people believe Everyone in church is perfect, there are no sinners in church. That's just simply untrue. We're all sinners. We hope that the church is full of people who are becoming more like Jesus, but we're not perfect.
- Other people believe that becoming a Christian will either solve all your problems, or it will mean giving up all fun and following a life of rules.
- Some people believe ministers and missionaries are more spiritual than other believers. And except for me, that's also untrue.

Well I want you to know that there have always been misconceptions about God. How he is supposed to act, what he's supposed to do, and who he is really. There were and are still

misconceptions about God and about his son Jesus. And today we're going to spend some time trying to understand how God used Jesus to change his disciples' misconceptions about who he was. And he also challenges us to change our understand of who Jesus is.

If I were to ask you to describe Jesus, what words might you use? Prophet? Good Teacher? Miracle Worker, Son of God? How about myth, or fairy tale, or ordinary man?

Often times we create our own picture of who Jesus is rather than discovering who the bible says Jesus is. Sometimes it's because we don't KNOW what the Bible says about Jesus, and other times we just don't want to deal with the consequences of Jesus being God's Son. Either we don't think we need a Savior, or that we have a sin problem.

The Hebrew word often used of Jesus is Messiah. It means God's anointed one, and this is how Jesus' disciples came to know him. And as we're about to see, that's what the crowds of people in Jerusalem thought of Him when they laid palm branches and coats on the road as Jesus rode on a colt into the city. But to them, Messiah didn't mean a spiritual savior, but a political savior. Many of them saw Jesus as a political candidate, in whom they would put their hope of freedom from Roman authority.

Now, turn in your Bibles to Luke 19:28-37. I'd like to take us to that road on which Jesus rode into Jerusalem on what we call Palm Sunday. Using the video by Ray Vander Laan, let's travel to Jerusalem, and learn about what happened that day, and what misconceptions of the Jews Jesus came to change.

***-Video- In this segment, Mr. Vander Laan shows how the Jesus' disciples mistook Jesus for a strictly political Messiah, rather than a spiritual sacrificial Lamb. On the day of Triumphal Entry, Jesus came to the Mount of Olives, and riding on a colt, he entered the city of Jerusalem. Again, the people cheered their national hero, but Jesus entered the city as God's chosen sacrifice to take away our sins.***

The crowds, the disciples, all gathered on that very hillside as Jesus rode into Jerusalem. That's where it happened, nearly two thousand years ago. But they missed it. They missed who Jesus really was. They were too wrapped up in their MISconception about who Jesus was to notice what was really going on.

Well, there are several reasons why they believed Jesus was going to be their political Messiah. Let's look at a few:

1. There were Old Testament Prophecies about this.

**9 Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion!  
Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem!  
See, your king [b] comes to you,  
righteous and having salvation,  
gentle and riding on a donkey,  
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.**

**10 I will take away the chariots from Ephraim  
and the war-horses from Jerusalem,  
and the battle bow will be broken.  
He will proclaim peace to the nations.  
His rule will extend from sea to sea  
and from the River [c] to the ends of the earth.**  
(Zechariah 9:9-10, NIV)

That sounds a lot like political victory. We're going to end the war, and there will be peace, and he will rule over the land. And so the people were expecting to see a political victory, and here comes this miracle-worker Jesus riding on a colt, just like the scripture predicted.

Isaiah 40:3 says a sign of the coming of the Messiah will be **"A voice of one calling: "In the desert prepare the way for the LORD <sup>[a]</sup> Make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God."**

The wilderness is East of Jerusalem. It's the desert, or wilderness that Jesus went into after he was baptized, where he was tempted by Satan. And it's out of that same wilderness he comes that you saw in the video. And the people see, "He has fulfilled the prophecy. He's the messiah!"

Now, John the Baptist recognized Jesus correctly. John was the one proclaiming the coming of Messiah, and when HE saw Jesus he said, **"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" John 1:29, NIV.**

John rightly recognized Jesus as the LAMB of God, who would be our sacrifice for sin. But on this day, the people only saw a future king who would free them from the Romans. After all, this was Passover time. It was a celebration of when Moses led the Israelites out of Egyptian slavery.

By the time of Jesus, they were once again in bondage, now to the Romans. Many of the people wanted a Messiah who would be a political or military leader who would drive out the Romans and restore their national pride.

So, on that day the lamb was picked, Jesus entered the city. This triumphal entry of Jesus was risky. People chanted "hosanna" – deliver us, give us our freedom – It was a political statement. That is why the leaders wanted Jesus to quiet his followers because they were afraid the Romans would come in and slaughter them. And they were waving palm branches – as Vander Laan mentions – more like our flag. The crowds are basically calling for Jesus to deliver them from the Romans. They wanted to make him king.

2. Also, they misunderstood what Jesus predicted about Himself.

We learned last week that Jesus asked his disciples who they thought he was. And Peter replied correctly that Jesus was the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of God. And Jesus said the answer was correct, and that on that truth he would build his church, and the gates of hell would not overcome the church.

Well, the disciples would have understood that politically, too. They thought Jesus was saying, the time has come to Jerusalem, to announce himself as king of Israel, and to conquer their enemies. But Jesus then says something troubling: **From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.**

**22Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!"**

**23Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men." (Matthew 16:21-23, NIV.)**

Even Jesus' own disciples didn't yet understand what Jesus was about to accomplish.

You see, the time had come for change. Many of our politicians are calling for change, but the change that Jesus brought was far more than any king or political leader could bring. Jesus

came to change our souls. He came to change our destinies. He came to change our hearts and our minds.

What good does it do to change our economy and make it better if my soul still winds up in hell? What good does it do to put more money in my pocket and have a bigger house if my eternity is to be separated from all the is good and right with God?

Jesus said it this way, “**For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul?**” (Matthew 16:26)

The better way to look at Jesus’ Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem is like the video points out. It was Lamb Selection Day. It was the day that the people chose their lamb for Passover Sacrifice. And on this day, God was showing the world the Lamb He had chosen to become the sacrifice for all sin. We need to recognize Jesus for who He is: the Lamb of God.

The lambs the people were instructed by the law to choose had to be without blemish; spotless. Offered by the sinner; sacrificed on the altar. John the Baptist had correctly announced Jesus as “The Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.” He was without moral blemish, because Jesus had never sinned. He was the only Son of God, and he was going to be offered up as the sacrifice for us.

The people didn’t get it then, and a lot of people still miss it today. But God has used Jesus to change misconceptions about who He is, and what He is like.

What misconceptions might you have about God?

#### **Misconceptions of God:**

- Some people think of God as a **Task-master God**: Harsh, condemning, demanding, cruel. But when He gave up his Son to die in our place, he demonstrated love and tenderness toward us. The Bible says that’s how God demonstrated his love for us, because even though we were sinners, he sent Jesus to die for us.
- Some people think God is an **Apathetic God** – “watchmaker god” – Well he created us but he has left us to our own devices. But that’s not true. He became one of us in Christ. The Bible says He became flesh, and he lived among us. And after Jesus rose from the grave and ascended into heaven, he left his Holy Spirit to be with each person who accepts Christ as Lord.

God wants a relationship with you. He wants to be a part of every day. God is not apathetic toward us. The question, then, becomes, “Are we apathetic toward Him?”

- Some people think of God as **Santa Claus**– He exists just to give us whatever we want – so we just ask and ask and he gives and gives. When you think about it, that’s kinda what people thought of God sending Jesus on that day. They wanted someone to make their life better here. They wanted less control by the Romans, perhaps more money or less taxes, or more freedom or property.

Jesus changes that idea entirely. Mainly because He didn’t come to just give us what we want, but he came to fulfill our deepest most dire need. He took our punishment for sin. He died in your place. He came to give you life, and purpose, and hope, and love. And yes, God provides for our physical needs, and yes he gives us things to enjoy in this life. But God is not Santa Claus. And He proved it when He sent Jesus.

God uses Jesus to change our perception/expectations of who God is. He’s not harsh or apathetic. He is not a Santa Claus, He’s not a politician. He is a loving God. And God demonstrated that through Jesus. He is the Lamb of God who takes away our sin!

Who do you think Jesus is? Jesus isn't a king, he was the King of kings. He isn't just a leader, but he is Lord of lords. He isn't just any man, he is God in the flesh. He wasn't just a good teacher, but he showed us how to live.

This is how he's asked us to live:

- We're to be the light of the world
- We're to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us
- We're to be humble like children.
- We're to have mercy and be forgiving
- We're to be servants.

And if he is already your Lord, will you live the way he told you to? Will you:

- Be light to the world
- Will you love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us
- Will you be humble like a child.
- Will you have mercy and be forgiving
- Will you be servants.

Jesus didn't just command us to do those things, but He did those things Himself, and he became the servant of all. The Bible says Jesus did not come to BE served, but TO serve. And He gave His life to pay our ransom. We weren't in captivity to Egypt or Rome, but to our sin and death. And Jesus paid the price for our freedom.

So let me ask you: Who do you believe Jesus is? Was he a good teacher? Was he a politician? Was he just a man? Or is he the Son of God? Is He Savior?

Is He YOUR Savior and Lord? If not, then you can choose to make Him your Lord today.

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