“Religion itself does not offend me at all. I'm an atheist, but I don't judge people for their beliefs (or almost anything else.) What offends me is religious leaders enticing their flock to discriminate against others for their choices in life. It offends me when religious people try and interfere with a woman's choice to have an abortion or try to prevent funding for stem cell research or discriminate against people for their sexual orientation, etc.”
“If you are a believer and think you're a saint, good for you. Not all of us were born to meet your definition for sainthood, nor do we care to join you in your expected paradise. In reality, having put up with religious zealots for a lifetime, is enough. Why would any self respecting, sane atheist want to endure such pain for an eternity? You can have it. Enjoy!”
Everybody Loves Jesus
Everybody Knows Jesus

- Everybody today claims to know who Jesus is.
- Jesus asked His disciples, “Who do men say I am?” — Mt. 16:13-17
  - John the Baptist
  - Elijah
  - Jeremiah
  - One of the prophets
- “Who do you say that I am?”
  - “You are the Christ, the Son of God.”
Who is Jesus?

- Universal name recognition
- 75% believe He was a real person
- 77% believe He was born of a virgin
- 69% believe He was the Son of God
- 67% believe He was divine
- 44% believe He was only human and committed sin
- 80% believe He rose from the dead
- 45% believe He will return during their lifetime
Who is Jesus?

Do the statistics mean that our culture has an accurate picture of Jesus?

In 1999 George Bush was asked to name the political philosopher that had most influenced him.
- “Christ, because He changed my heart”

In popular opinion, Jesus is a political philosopher.
- Animal rights activist, flag-waving patriot, environmental crusader, champion of free trade, enemy of gun control, advocate of gay marriage
Consumers want vague spirituality

- "god" is generic
- man is basically good
- your problem is not sin but your unrealized goodness.
- "salvation" does not require a savior, just a little self-help
Who is Jesus?

Everybody has a place for Jesus

- Secularists, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Agnostics, Hindus, Wiccans, Baha’i, New-Agers

He was...

- A good man, a prophet, a teacher, a deva, an avatar, a consciousness, an enlightened being, a divine spirit.

Everybody Loves Jesus, But Why?
The Jesus of the First Century

- Harsh with sinners, Mt. 23
- Determined to die for them
- Couldn’t stop talking about His cross and why He must endure it.
- He was too divine, too bloody, too human, too dead, too alive
  - So the culture invents its own “Jesus.”
American Spirituality

- Jesus is shaped by the “felt needs” of the culture.
- “Jesus” is all things to all men
  - No wonder everybody loves Him.
  - What’s not to love?
  - This “jesus” is everything, the Jesus of scripture is not.
Everybody Loves Jesus

Because...
- He is obscure
- He is ambiguous
- He is inoffensive
- He is affirming
- He is pluralistic

A “Jesus” shaped by 21st century postmodern sensibilities.
21st Century Postmodern Jesus

- Helps you find purpose
- Helps you reach your potential
- Helps you realize your innate goodness
- Helps you achieve self-fulfillment
- He was sent by a “sugar-daddy god from a country club heaven to help us be all we can be.”
21st Century Postmodern Jesus

- He said nice things.
- He never hurt a fly.
- He lived to show us that we are better than we think we are.
- He died to show us that you can accomplish anything if you just apply yourself.
- His message fits neatly on a bumper sticker.
- His spirit is the spirit of the age.
Offended by Jesus
Disciples’ Relationship With the World

John 15:18, 19 “If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. “If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you.”
Disciples’ Relationship With the World

- The world hates you.
- If you were of the world the world would love you.
- “I chose you out of the world”
- “They hated me without a cause”
  Jn. 15:25; Ps. 69:4
Offended by Jesus

- His Words
- His Miracles
- His Claims
- His Cross
- His Grace
Mt. 15:12 – The disciples came and said to Him, “Do You not know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this statement?”

Disciples accused of breaking the tradition of the elders, 15:2

Jesus answered by accusing the Pharisees of breaking the commandment of God for the sake of tradition, 15:3.

“You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophecy of you: This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me.” 15:7-8
Offended by His Words

- Jesus was not purposefully offending the Pharisees.
- They were offended because Jesus characterized them as hypocrites and transgressors.
- The disciples witnessing the rebuke and the implied displeasure of the Pharisees were fearful of the possible consequences.
Offended by His Words

Many today are offended when they learn what Jesus actually said.

- Many have only a “cleaned-up” version of Jesus.”
- Many completely disregard what Jesus said and vent their anger and discontent on those who point it out.

**Conclusion:** We must either accept or reject all that Jesus said, Jn.12:48.
Offended by Jesus

- His Words
- His Miracles
Offended by His Miracles

- Modernism
  - Does not allow for the supernatural.
  - Miracles attributed to the gullibility of the 1st century populace.
  - Naturalistic alternatives are offered for the miracles.
  - The “legend” is a result of exaggerated claims and the passage of time.
Offended by His Miracles

- Today many are offended by the miracles of Jesus.
  - Those who want to impress their modernistic friends that they are enlightened.
  - They want to hang on to a Jesus that is not offensive but they deny the very evidence that proved He was the Son of God.
Offended by His Miracles

Conclusion:

John 20:30 “Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.”
Offended by His Miracles

- Not only are there a few “embarrassing” signs to be dealt with there are “many other signs.”
- This becomes a stumbling-block for many people.
Offended by Jesus

- His Words
- His Miracles
- His Claims
Offended by His Claims

John 5:18 “For this reason therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.”
Offended by His Claims

- Mat. 9:3 to the paralytic – “your sins are forgiven...this fellow blasphemes”
- Mat. 26:63-66 on trial – “tell us whether you are the Christ, the Son of God...you have said it...He has blasphemed...He deserves death.”
Offended by His Claims

- Modern society considers it bad manners.
  - They will accept that he is a prophet.
  - They deny the implications of His divinity because it elevates him above all of the other religious teachers of the world.
  - It is not politically correct.
Conclusion: Many today are unwilling to speak out concerning the exclusive nature of the gospel and Christianity, and to proclaim unequivocally that He is God and that there is salvation in no other.

Acts 4:12 “And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.”
Offended by Jesus

- His Words
- His Miracles
- His Claims
- His Cross
Offended by His Cross

- To the Jews it was a stumbling-block

  1 Cor. 1:23 “but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness,...”

- It did not fit their preconceived ideas of the Messiah.

- They did not understand their own prophets who prophesied that He must suffer.
Offended by His Cross

Conclusion: Many today are embarrassed by the cross. The cross points out the horribleness of their own sin.

After all they are “pretty decent folks.”

They hate people to think that they needed Jesus to die for them.
Offended by Jesus

- His Words
- His Miracles
- His Claims
- His Cross
- His Grace
Offended by His Grace

- **Jonah 3:10** – “When God saw their deeds, that they turned from their wicked way, then God relented concerning the calamity…”

- **4:1** “But it greatly displeased Jonah and he became angry.

- **4:4** The Lord said, “Do you have good reason to be angry?”
Luke 15:28-32 The older Son – “He became angry and was unwilling to go in.”

“But we had to celebrate and rejoice, for this brother of yours was dead and has begun to live, and was lost and has been found.”
Matthew 20 - The Workers in the Vineyard

12 “These last men have worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden and the scorching heat of the day.”

14 “Take what is yours and go, but I wish to give to this last man the same as to you.”
Offended by His Grace

- **Conclusion:** The Jews did not like the fact that the gospel message was for Gentiles.
- Many today take offense at the grace of God which is conditioned upon obedience.
- Many today or unwilling to forgive the offenses of others even when God has forgiven them.
- Remember, Christians are forgiven **NOT** by our grace but by the grace of God.
Offended by Jesus

- His Words
- His Miracles
- His Claims
- His Cross
- His Grace
Offended by Jesus

- If we are offended by Jesus we cannot be saved.
- Paul said “I am not ashamed of the gospel for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.” Rom. 1:16
- Don’t be offended, accept Jesus.
- Believe and obey.