



## What Do You Expect?<sup>(Part 5)</sup>

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We need a remedy. This is, to me, one of the most obvious things I would expect from a good and loving God. Why else did He visit His planet? To take rock samples? To inspect the soil? To wish glad tidings on the human species?

All teenagers have heard the discouraging dictum, "Welcome to the real world!" This phrase is born out of shattered dreams and ideal expectations confronted with a calloused world. We are stuck with the real world, while we are trying to reach the ideal world. Why do we expect and long for the ideal? Could it be we are made for it and need to be delivered to it?

God sees the excruciating predicament and the powerlessness of humanity. And He knows the task calls for the Everlasting Hero.

Dost ask who that may be?  
Christ Jesus, it is He;

Lord Sabaoth His name,  
From age to age the same,  
And He must win the battle.

I was recently asked in a discussion group of Berkeley students, "What about people who do not accept the idea that there is evil in the world?" It's a good question, for in the minefields of today's culture, this is a current hotbed of debate. We only need a remedy if we have an ailment. If nobody acknowledges the ailment, then they won't expect a remedy.

This is the general philosophical problem of relativism in today's culture that has worked itself out in redefining ethics. On the surface, it may sound like a legitimate position, but in reality, it is bankrupt. Nobody actually behaves like a relativist. Everyone has a soft-spot of morality of some kind, be it racism, environmentalism, feminism, sexuality, tolerance, or even driving manners on the freeway. In actuality, I find relativism to be nothing more than the expressed distasteful feelings of a culture against moral obligation and mature responsibility.

Though I do not endorse everything Dr. Laura Schlessinger says, one does not have to listen to her

radio program very long to note that humans are desperate for the banquet of love while avoiding the recipe. Humans are distrustful, controlling, selfish, dishonest, resentful, and afraid. Dr. Laura's direct no-nonsense advice to callers is a loud wake-up call to a culture slumbering in the illusion of relativism. It is no surprise that her show is one of the most listened-to radio programs in America.

We need a remedy to the problem of our own dysfunction and wickedness. We need someone to bring the cure. This is what I expect from a good and loving God. And this is what I find in Jesus of Nazareth. He is the Great Physician and his prescription is not merely a dab of peaceful ointment and a pill of happy feelings. Rather, he comes to do major surgery. The old selfish self gets replaced by a new self with the power to pursue the purpose for which we were created: to know God and be like Him.

God spoke this directly in Ezekiel as a precursor to His coming, "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh" (Ezekiel 36:26).

We don't have to be hopeless and helpless anymore. We don't have to be left in the dark as to how to solve our moral and relationship dilemmas. The Savior has come.

But it is not only his presence and teaching that provides the remedy, but his dying on the Cross and rising from the dead. Previously this week, I mentioned the reliability of the fact that Christ rose from the dead. Here I want to reflect on his death.

On the Cross, Jesus Christ satisfied the justice God required of all humans that reject Him. The Bible calls this rejection "sin" and it involves the desire and behavior to be autonomous, selfish, and dishonest (and the other vices I mentioned earlier). Not only are these deeply offensive to God, but are actually against the very grain of the purpose of our created selves: to reflect the image of God.

Only the death of Christ can satisfy the justice of God and give us the power to walk out of our vices and into his virtues. On the Cross, the real world and the ideal world meet, and Jesus Christ prevails. He opens the wide gates of the Heavenly Country to bring the ideal into the real. As Ravi Zacharias has pointed out, "Christ did not come to make bad men

good, but to make dead men alive." To be alive is to have the power to walk out of badness into the glorious light of God's goodness made rich and fertile in our souls.

There is no remedy in other religions like this that helps the morally blind and the spiritually hungry. This is what I expect from God, and it is only found in Jesus Christ.

This concludes this series on our expectations from God. He has offered us accuracy, reliability, proximity, and a remedy. Only the Christian God offers this in such coherent detail. We don't need to be like the Martians (see Part 1). We now have the signature signposts of our expectations of God and what He has done to establish connection with us. God has arrived! Let this be your pondering, not only this week, but in a lifetime of discovering the fullness of God in the person of Jesus Christ.

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