

the bystanders, was repeated over and over again until everyone cried: “*The boy is right! The Emperor is naked! It’s true!*”...

### **My Comment**

The term *New Age* is derived from astrology indicating that this earth, perhaps the cosmos, is beginning an evolutionary transition to a New Age of spirituality and harmony of all things. Tolle’s *A New Earth* claims that some have reached a stage of human evolution that they are ready now to make the next evolutionary step to full awareness of their own divinity. Anyone who does not understand or appreciate his message is not ready. Like those who looked at the emperor’s new clothes, if you can’t see you are not among the enlightened. Of course, Tolle would not say it, but in the words of Andersen’s tale we who don’t see are too “*stupid or incompetent.*” Perhaps the real problem is that some want to believe so badly they see what is not actually there. Tolle and other New Agers are depending upon human wisdom to guide them. The Lord said through Jeremiah, “*It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps.*” (Jeremiah 10:23)

### **Who Is Jesus?**

*“No matter where you look, a cloud of confusion hangs over the message of Jesus. To cut through it we have to be specific about who we mean when we refer to Jesus. One Jesus is historical, and we know next to nothing about him. Another Jesus is the one appropriated by Christianity. He was created by the Church to fulfill its agenda. The third Jesus, the one this book is about, is as yet so unknown that even the most devout Christians don’t suspect that he exists. Yet he is the Christ we cannot – and must not – ignore.”* So says Deepak Chopra, one of the most prominent and widely followed of today’s New Thought (New Age) gurus, in the opening of his new book, *The Third Jesus: The Christ We Cannot Ignore*.<sup>8</sup>

Mr. Chopra is not satisfied with Jesus of the Bible. While there is little in secular history about the Master Teacher who changed the world

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8 Chopra, Deepak, *The Third Jesus: The Christ We Cannot Ignore* (2008), p. 1, Crown Publishing Group, Random House, Inc., New York, NY.

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with his teaching, the Old Testament is rich with the prophesies of the coming Messiah, the Savior of the world, and the prophetic longings of the day He would appear. And appear He did. We have ample record in the New Testament of His coming, His miraculous deeds, His authoritative teaching, His claims to divinity, and finally to His death, burial and triumphant resurrection from the grave. We need no more. There is, in fact, confusion about His teaching. But not because His words were confusing or the preservation of what He said has in some way been garbled in passage through time to us.

Some of the things Mr. Chopra says about the Jesus of the Bible are truly offensive. While he is a well educated man, he obviously does not understand the Biblical concepts of peace, love and humility, or he refuses to acknowledge them. Listen to his assessment of Jesus of the Bible: *"The first Jesus is less than consistent, as a closer reading of the gospels will show. If Jesus was perfectly peaceful, why did he declare, 'Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword'? (Matthew 10:34) If he was perfectly loving, why did he say, 'Throw out the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth'? (Matthew 25:30) (Sometimes the translation is even harsher, and Jesus commands 'the worthless slave' to be consigned to hell.) If Jesus was humble, why did he claim to rule the earth beyond the power of any king? At the very least, the living Jesus was a man of baffling contradictions."*

Does Chopra not realize the fundamental truth that good and evil cannot coexist peacefully? Jesus said he came bringing a sword in that the truth that He taught would certainly divide. Not all will accept it. Pressing absolute truth in any set of circumstances is likely to cause division, even turmoil, because some people do not want to hear it. Of course, since Chopra is a New Ager he doesn't believe in absolute truth, yet he holds out the promise of peace among all who follow his philosophy. But what a hollow promise it is since everyone is free to define his own "truth", set his own rules, and do his own thing. There can never be peace in that.

And, what is love, Mr. Chopra? What is your definition? The love that Jesus extended to all mankind is sacrificial, willing to give all for the object of love even while they were still enemies. (Romans 5:6-8) And through His beloved apostle, John, He teaches us *“this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments.”* (1 John 5:3) This is the love Jesus consistently expressed and taught. Casting out those who refuse this kind of love is not a contradiction of it.

Finally, Mr. Chopra, since when does humility mean subservience? Though Jesus was and is Lord of all, He taught and practiced humility in service to others. There is no contradiction in that.

There is no contradiction in Jesus or His teaching. The contradictions are all in a system of New Thought that confuses the material universe with that which is divine, promises universal peace as a result of all people doing their own thing, preaches a doctrine that is not really a belief, claims we can evolve to a higher, better level though there is no standard of what is better, and offers no evidence that its claims are true because the gurus simply know within themselves; they know.

Chopra sees the “first” Jesus, the historical Jesus, as inconsistent. The evidence does not support the charge. The “second” he says is the embodiment of all the ills of Christianity concocted by evil men motivated by their own political or materialistic ends to add to, detract from and twist and distort the pure teaching of the Christ of the Bible. The answer to all of this is simple, and it has been the same simple answer all down through the annals of history: return to the pure teaching of the Master and His apostles given in the first century; restore the New Testament church to the worship, practice and teaching approved by the Lord and His inspired men. There is no other reasonable or logical answer.

The third Jesus, the Christ Chopra says we cannot and must not ignore, is not at all the same Jesus we see in the Bible. Chopra says, *“I want to offer the possibility that Jesus was truly, as he proclaimed, a savior. Not the savior, not the one and only Son of God. Rather, Jesus*

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*embodied the highest level of enlightenment. He spent his brief adult life describing it, teaching it, and passing it on to future generations. Jesus intended to save the world by showing others the path to God-consciousness.”<sup>9</sup>*

As I see Chopra's position, he has put a creative twist on an old attempt to make of Jesus someone different than presented in Scriptures. He has created a third out of a long-running attempt to make two. Why? In order to better serve New Age thought. In his excellent article, *A clash about Jesus*,<sup>10</sup> Marc Gibson explores the century old debate between modernistic scholars who would divide our Lord “*into the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith*”.<sup>11</sup> “*Both of these stories afford Jesus a great deal of respect, but they are very different stories in regard to his importance. In one, Jesus is worshipped. In the other, he is simply respected. In one, he is intimately associated with God. In the other, he points to God. In one, he is the way. In the other, he shows the way. We cannot understand the public discussion about Jesus without understanding that the discussion entails these two distinct stories.*”<sup>12</sup>

Chopra claims this third Jesus is a savior, not the Savior. He is not the one and only Son of God. Christ's purpose, he says, was to show the world *the path to God-consciousness*. Of course, none of Chopra's claims are supportable by Scripture. They fly in the face of several claims Jesus made to being *the* Son of God, *the only* way to God, *the* Savior of us all, not from ourselves, but from sin. Jesus is not just another in an exhausting line of spiritual gurus espousing a strange mixture of Christianity and Eastern religions as just one more way of many to *God-consciousness*. The bottom line is all New Age claims are destined to fail. Regarding Jesus, “*God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*” (Philippians 2:9-11)

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9 Chopra, Deepak, *The Third Jesus: The Christ We Cannot Ignore* (2008), p. 2, Crown Publishing Group, Random House, Inc., New York, NY.

10 Gibson, Marc W., *a clash about Jesus* (June/July 2008), pp. 7-10, Truth Magazine, Volume LII, Numbers 6 & 7, Truth Magazine, Bowling Green, KY.

11 Ibid, page 7

12 Ibid, quoting Darrell I. Bock & Daniel B. Wallace, *Dethroning Jesus: Exposing Popular Culture's Quest to Unseat the Biblical Christ*, 5.

## *Eight: Finding Your Inner Space*

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**O**n a Monday evening last spring, with millions in attendance via the Internet, Oprah interviewed Eckhart Tolle regarding chapter eight, *The Discovery of Inner Space*, of his book, *A New Earth*. This chapter is about *Object Consciousness* versus *Space Consciousness* and *Rising Above* rather than *Falling below Thought*. Tolle explains on page 227, “*Object consciousness needs to be balanced by space consciousness for sanity to return to our planet and for humanity to fulfill its destiny. The arising of space consciousness is the next stage in the evolution of humanity. Space consciousness means that in addition to being conscious of things—which is always about sense perceptions, thoughts, and emotions—there’s an undercurrent of awareness. Awareness implies that you are not only conscious of things, but you are also conscious of being conscious.*”

### **The Thoughtlessness of Inner Space**

Space consciousness, says Eckhart Tolle, is observing your presence in a situation without passing judgment on the events of the moment. I understand the idea of observing presence. For many years, when in a confrontational situation, I have imagined myself sitting on a shelf on the wall watching the combatants of the moment without becoming embroiled. Removing myself in that imaginary way has helped me to remain

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cool and thoughtful under fire. Unfortunately, I have not always remembered to do it. But when I did, it worked.

Of course, withholding judgment, the other part of “*space consciousness*”, is an unbiblical concept. Paul said, “*Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith.*” (2 Corinthians 13:5) The Hebrews writer affirmed that the application of scripture involves judgment because “...*the word of God... is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*” (Hebrews 4:12) And Jesus said, “*Therefore by their fruits you will know them.*” (Matthew 7:20) Paul adds further instruction: “...*you are also full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.*” (Romans 15:14) “...*if a man is overtaken in a trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.*” (Galatians 6:1) Every one of these admonitions of scripture requires measuring behavior and events against the truth and exercising judgment regarding how to proceed.

It is not ours to pass condemning judgment upon anyone, but we are obligated to judge the situation, the circumstances and the fruit of individuals in order to promote change for the better. If Tolle is saying “*keep your cool under fire*”, that is sound advice. But rising above thoughts, which evaluate the events of the moments (whether good or bad) is not sound advice. God does not intend for His people to “*float*” through life, but rather take an active role in teaching, admonishing and encouraging as the situation requires. (2 Timothy 3:16-4:4) The example of Jesus was no less.

### **This Too Will Pass**

The peace that Tolle promises in his book, *A New Earth*, comes from understanding that everything faced in this life can be looked at with the attitude that “*this too will pass.*” On page 225, he says the key is knowing that “*nonresistance, not resisting, nonjudgment, and nonattachment are the three aspects of true freedom and enlightened liv-*