

CHAPTER 2

CLIMATES, CULTURES AND CHRIST

There are great differences between people. There are also similarities. Most of us have two eyes, a nose, a mouth, two ears, two hands and two feet. These are physical characteristics that we share in common as humans. We also share certain basic emotional needs (the need to be loved and valued, the need to belong, etc.). On the other hand, there are many, many differences between people also.

Suppose a young girl from China were to come to live with your family for one year. Do you think that she would observe many things that we do differently from what she is used to? Would she notice differences in how we eat and how we dress and how we talk? Suppose you were to go to China for a visit. What kind of differences do you think you would see?

Suppose you were able to spend a year with a missionary among people living in a jungle in Africa or among tribal people in Brazil. Would these people act differently in some ways? Would they eat the same kinds of food you eat? Would they travel in the same way that you would travel when back home (car, bus, bicycle, roller skates)? Would they worship differently? Would they talk differently? Would they sing differently? If you were to spend a year in England, France, Germany or Spain, do you think you would still notice many unusual customs and things that seem very different to you?

Are there people living today who do not have all of the "modern conveniences" that you might have? Are there people who live without cars, television sets, radio, computers, cell phones, refrigerators, clocks or watches, toilets that flush, and washing machines? Do these people need to communicate, travel, tell time, eat and wash their clothes just like you do? Would they have different ways of doing these things?

People eat different kinds of food. Do you like Italian food? Do you like Chinese food? Do you like Mexican food? Do you like the food in your school cafeteria? Do you like the food at fast food restaurants? Have you ever had a meal over at the home of one of your friends? Does that mother cook the same way your mother cooks? Does that mother serve the same kinds of food that your mother serves, or are there differences?

Think about language and the way people talk. Do you know anyone who speaks a foreign language? Do you know anyone who speaks with an accent? Those living in Boston tend to speak English differently than those who live in Brooklyn, New York. Think about the students in your class at school. Do any of them use different words and say things differently than you do? Can you speak any words in a foreign language?

What about dress? Would an Eskimo dress differently than a person who lives in Florida? Would a business man dress differently than a farmer? Would a baseball player dress differently than a basketball player? Would a policeman dress differently than a soldier? Do your friends dress differently than you do in some ways?

There are differences in how people live. Some live in the city and some live in the country. Some live in tents, some live in a crowded apartment and some live in large homes. Some people

sleep on the ground and others sleep on beds. Some sit on the ground as they eat and others sit on chairs.

People have different ways of spending their free time. Some like to fish and others like to hunt. Some like to bowl and others like to golf and some like both and some like neither. Do your friends always enjoy doing the same things that you enjoy doing?

Can you think of other differences in the way people live and the way people do things?

Different Concepts

People have different concepts, thoughts and ideas about things. For example, suppose you were to ask people this question: *What is God like?* Do you think you would get many different answers? Would the students in your Sunday School class give different answers to this question? There are some people who do not even believe there is a God! If you were to ask your friends at school this question ("What is God like?"), what different answers might they give?

Suppose you were to ask people this question: *What is the most important thing in life?* Do you think you would get different answers? Some might say, "Having fun." An athlete might say, "Winning games!" A scholar or a serious student might say, "Learning." A business man might say, "Making money." What are some other answers you might get?

Suppose you were to ask people this: *What must a person do to get to heaven?* Would people answer this question in different ways? What do you think some of the answers would be? Would most of these answers be wrong answers? _____ What would be the one correct answer to this question (Acts 16:31 and John 14:6)?

Yes, people have all kinds of different concepts and ideas about things. There are so many different religions in the world because people choose to believe in their ideas rather than in God's Word.

God Made the Climate

God made this world and He made all the people on it. In the last chapter we learned that "the earth is the _____ and the fulness thereof" (Psalm 24:1).

Today many people are concerned about "global warming" and climate changes. It is important to remember that God designed our world and its climate. He controls the temperature and rainfall in a wonderful, precise way so that man can live in this world. God is in control of the weather.

As you read Genesis chapter 1, can you find the verse which says that God made the sun?
 _____ Can you find the verse which says that God made lights in the heavens which would be for signs and seasons and days and years? _____

After the great flood in the days of Noah, God made a promise which He has never broken. It is

found in Genesis 8:22. What are some things that God said would never cease while the earth remains? _____

As we think about the world we live in we recognize that there are great differences in climate. There are places that are very hot (the tropical regions) and there are places that are very cold (the polar regions). There are places that are very dry (desert regions) and there are places that receive a great deal of rain. There are places, such as New England, where the climate changes greatly (the summers are very hot and the winters are very cold). There are other places where the climate stays about the same (such as those places that are near the equator). God made the climates and God made the seasons.

Man Made the Culture

Culture (the way people live and do things and the concepts people have) is something that man has developed. God made the world and the climates. God made the people of the world, but God did not make people do the things they do and think the way they think.

In Genesis 4:19 we learn about a man named Lamech who started a new custom. Instead of having one wife which was God's plan from the beginning, he took for himself _____ wives! God allowed this to happen, but did God make this custom?

In Exodus 32:2-4,19 the children of Israel made a golden calf and worshipped it and danced before it. Was this something that man did or was this something that God did?

People used to sacrifice their own children to the false gods that they worshipped (see Deuteronomy 12:31). This was part of their religion. Is human sacrifice a custom that God made? _____ Did God tell people to do this (Leviticus 20:1-5)? _____

In Romans 1:23-25 we learn that people who should have been worshipping the **CREATOR** began worshipping the C _____ (Romans 1:25). Is creature worship something that God wanted men to do? _____

Suppose someone tells you that he believes in **reincarnation** (the belief that after a person dies he comes back into this life in a new body--either in the body of a person or in the body of an animal). Did this person get this concept from God? Did this person get this idea from God's Word (see Hebrews 9:27)? God allows people to think in the wrong way, but God did not make people think this way. God allows people to live a certain way and do certain things, but this does not mean that God is pleased by these things.

God even allows the devil and his demons to influence the minds of men. In 1 Timothy 4:1 we are told that in the latter times people will pay attention to "doctrines of devils (demons)". Doctrines of demons are teachings that are not true and that are different from the true teaching that is found in the Bible.

People have many customs and concepts in their religious exercises and practices and activities, but just because people say and do different things does not make these things right. There are those who would say, "Many do it, therefore it must be okay." Is this true? Is the crowd always right? If your friends do it, does this mean it must be right?

Often our customs cover our real needs, even the greatest need of all which is the need to be the person God wants us to be.

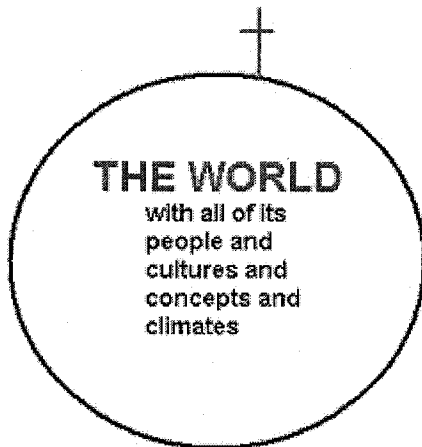
The Cross of Christ

God made the world and the people and the climate. But people have made a mess out of the world because of sin. "All we like sheep have gone _____; we have turned every one to his _____ way" (Isaiah 53:6). Man has done his own thing and gone his own way and has ignored his Creator! In the middle of all the CULTURE we must remember that there is a CHRIST who died for every person on the face of the earth:

Whom did Christ die for?

"the sins of the _____"
 _____" (1 John 2:2)

He "tasted death for _____"
 _____" (Hebrews 2:9)



"God so loved the _____ that He gave His only begotten Son" (John 3:16)

Did Christ come to condemn (judge) the world or to save it (John 3:17)?

Think about all of the people that you see on the news, on the streets, and at the supermarket. They are all different and they all have different ways of doing things and different ways of thinking. Did the Lord Jesus Christ die for each one of them?

The World's Problems

Where do the problems of the world come from? The problems come from the people! Think about the problem of war. Is war a problem caused by God or is war a problem caused by sinful man? The real problem is with people! ***And you are one of these people!***

You are living right in the middle of this world, with all of its climates, cultures, concepts and problems. Christ has died to save ***you***. Are you saved? How can you be saved?

God's Plan of Salvation

God's plan of salvation can be thought of as ABC steps (it's as simple as ABC!):

(A) ADMIT that you are a sinner and that you need to be saved.

The Bible says: "All have _____ and come short of the glory of

God" (Romans 3:23). Does the **ALL** include you? _____ Have you seen yourself as a guilty sinner who deserves God's judgment and who deserves death (being separated from God forever)—see Romans 6:23?

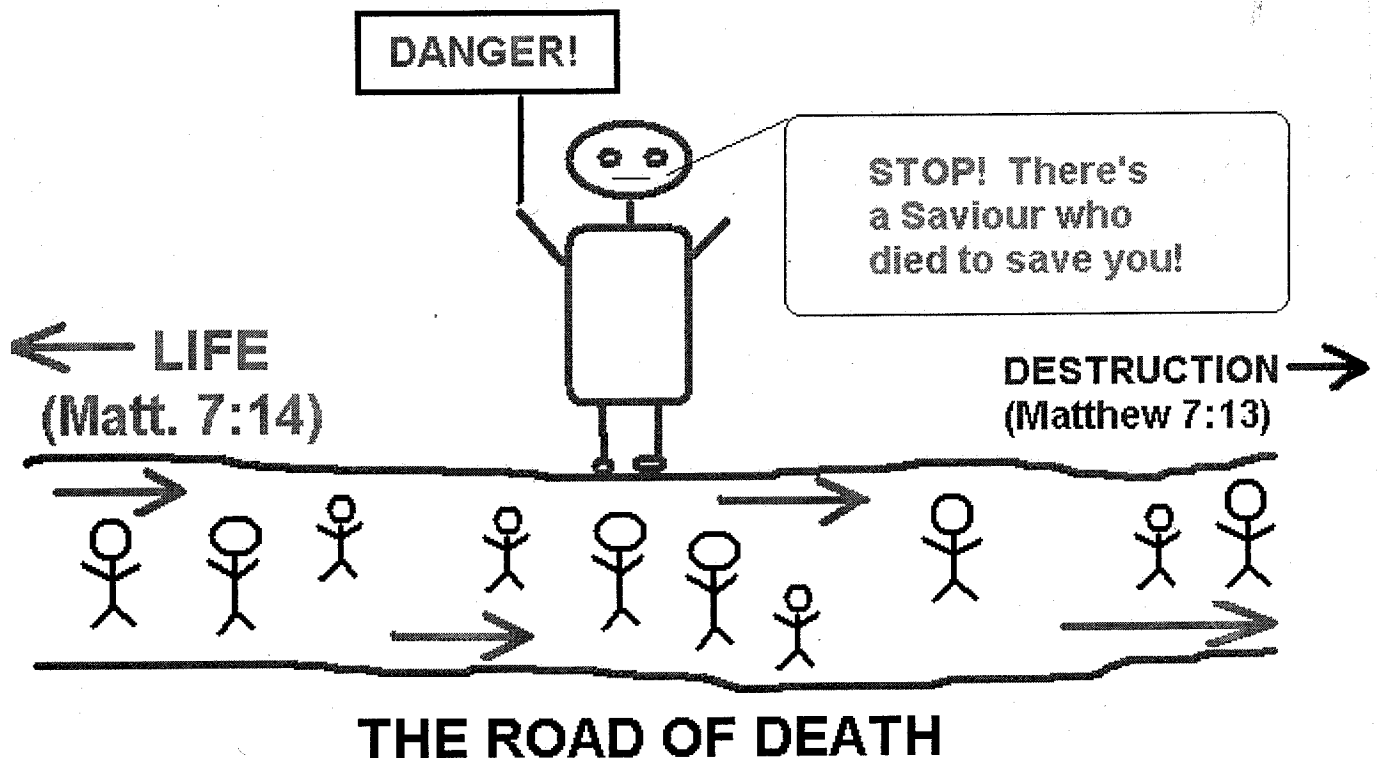
(B) BELIEVE on Christ.

"B _____ on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31). You need to be able to say something like this: "I believe that Jesus is the Son of God and that He died for me. He was punished for my sins and He died so that I might live and have eternal life. I believe that Christ is **able** to save me and that He is **willing** to save me, and right now I am going to ask Him to save me" (see Romans 10:13).

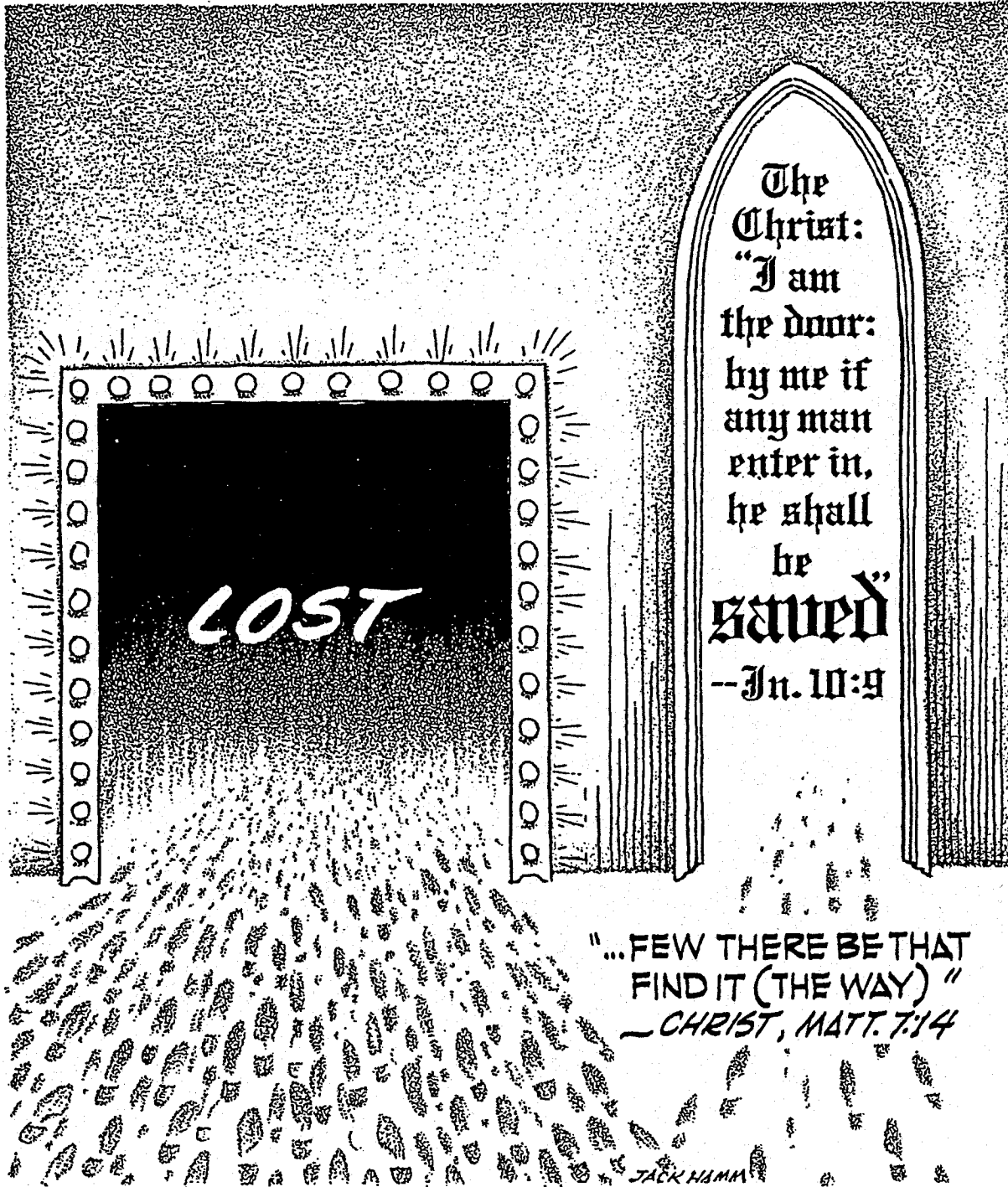
(B) CONFESS Christ as your Saviour and Lord. See Romans 10:9-10.

A person does not confess Christ in order to be saved. He confesses Christ because he is saved. If he has really believed on Christ, then he is proud of His Saviour and is not ashamed to tell others about Him.

If you have really believed on Christ then you will want to say so with thanksgiving and to share this with others. Have you ever shared this with your parents and with your Sunday School teacher? Have you ever told any of your friends that you are saved? Remember, most people are headed in the wrong direction, and God wants you to hold up a sign and tell others about the Saviour:



HIS WORDS ARE SPECIFIC ENOUGH



"...FEW THERE BE THAT
FIND IT (THE WAY)"
— CHRIST, MATT. 7:14

JACK HAMM