

D. James Kennedy's Impotent Jesus

In his sermon "[The Sin of Unbelief \(Part 2\)](#)," Christian apologist D. James Kennedy speaks out against "unbelief" and "unbelievers." In developing his point, he makes use of the example of Doubting Thomas, a character in the gospel narrative found only in the book of John. Kennedy finds this example useful because, according to the story, Thomas did not readily accept the testimony of his fellow disciples that Jesus had been resurrected from the dead. Thomas wanted to see firsthand evidence that Jesus was really resurrected. Says Kennedy, Thomas "is like many who say, 'unless I can see it, hear it, touch it, I will not believe.'" According to Kennedy, this requirement for evidence is an attitude of "sin." So accordingly, Thomas was sinning by asking for evidence to support the claim that Jesus had been resurrected; the believer is supposed to "believe," not "know." Kennedy's assessment is corroborated to a marked degree by the words which the author of the gospel of John puts into Jesus' mouth: "blessed are those who haven't seen and yet believe." It's hard to see this as anything other than a praising endorsement of sheer gullibility, of suspending the requirements of knowledge for the sake of believing a storybook tale.

Then Kennedy makes a most remarkable assertion. He states:

Now Christ cannot appear personally to all of the billions and billions of people that have lived on the earth since that time, but we have the testimony of many of those that have seen him at that time....

If I were a Christian, I would find this statement most puzzling. Why can't Christ "appear personally to all of the billions and billions of people that have lived on earth" since the 1st century? Christ is the second person in the trinity, a member of the "Godhead," and thus is omnipotent, omnipresent and illimitable by the constraints of this world. If Christ could appear to [Saul of Tarsus](#) on his way to Damascus, why can't he appear to other people, regardless of how many that might be? After all, all human beings who have ever walked the earth were supposedly created by this supernatural being called Christ. In fact, they claim that Christ created the earth to begin with. So why in supernaturalism would Kennedy think his Christ "cannot appear personally to all of the billions of people that have lived on the earth"? Kennedy most likely thinks all those billions will appear before Christ one day, does he not? So here we have a reversal of sorts: the god is unable to appear to man, while man is able to appear before the god.

At any rate, Kennedy does not explain why he thinks "Christ cannot appear personally to all of the billions of people that have lived on earth since that time." He simply slips this premise into his sermon hoping no one seizes upon it for examination. This is how the mystics try to get away with their egregious landgrabs, and watch the sea of chins in his audience nodding in uncritical agreement.

Now we should now ask how well this comports with other things that Kennedy himself has affirmed before his audiences. Consider what he states in his brief sermon entitled "[I Can't Believe That!](#)" He says:

If one can't believe in miracles, it is quite obvious that one can't believe in God. The disbelief in the miraculous is simply a statement of atheism. So, when a person says to you, "I can't swallow this business about Jonah being swallowed by a whale," you could simply say to him, "Oh, you're an atheist." That will shock the person. "Uhwah uh not ra really." "Oh, yes, you're atheist. You obviously can't believe in a miracle, and if you can't believe in a miracle, that is ipso facto atheism. If God cannot prepare such a fish, He obviously never created the world. If He didn't create the world, He is obviously not God.

When Kennedy tells his audience that "Christ cannot appear personally to all of the billions of people that have lived on earth" since the 1st century, he's essentially saying that he "can't swallow this business about" Jesus being able to perform a miracle that the bible itself portrays Jesus performing in the book of Acts. We're supposed to believe that Jesus appeared before Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus, but when the opportunity comes for the same Jesus to appear before any of us today, Jesus is suddenly stricken with supernatural impotence. Indeed, such impotence would have to be supernatural, for natural impotence would not be powerful enough to constrain Jesus.

So does Kennedy truly believe in miracles? Or is belief in the miraculous subject to the flip of a light switch, able to be turned on and off given the expedience of the moment? If I were a Christian, it would trouble me to think that Jesus could not appear before all human beings as he allegedly did before Saul of Tarsus on the road to

Damascus as described in Acts 9 and 22. But then again, I never was good at simply *believing* and suspending my desire to *know*. And they tell me that my worldview "borrows" from Christianity? They obviously don't know what they're talking about (but many do want to *believe* this).

Personally, I have no problem denying miracles, since miracles are an expression of the primacy of consciousness metaphysics. So I can be consistent where Kennedy has to shape-shift before his own audiences. It would be better for people like the late D. James Kennedy to have taken a vow of silence on such matters.

by Dawson Bethrick

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