



I think pick 'n' mix is great. You get a bag of sweets with only the ones you want. Foam shrimps, cola bottles and strawberry pencils fill mine. Frank Winfield Woolworth came up with pick 'n' mix in the 19th century. Since then, pick and mix has become common place. Pick and mix has evolved from simply picking your own sweets, to a philosophy of life: streaming services instead of fixed TV schedules;

coffee with 17 adjectives before you say the word coffee, social media feeding individual preferences. In just one day, people can engage in Buddhist meditation, secular politics, veganism, stoic philosophy, fitness culture and science fiction fandom. For the most part, choosing our own combination is something to be enjoyed and to give thanks to God for but only if the consequences of poor choice are small. But when choices are highly interconnected and mistakes have serious consequences, you certainly don't want to play pick 'n' mix with constructing your house, taking strong medicines or the things that affect your eternal salvation and damnation.

The Danger At Large John wrote this letter to a group of believers who were facing false teachers who were saying that all that is material is evil, so, Jesus could not be God and live in a material body. They taught that at Jesus' baptism divinity came upon him to equip him for teaching and healing but his divinity left Jesus prior to his suffering. Their teaching made much of Jesus being a perfect example of a life well lived but denied that he could be both fully God and fully man. These false teachers were playing pick 'n' mix with Jesus as if Jesus was a bag they could put in whatever they liked.

The devil is working hard to help us form Jesus in our own image. The latest trend online is montage videos of happy moments that end with the word "hallelujah", like: 'Morning coffees hallelujah', 'sunny days hallelujah', 'my pets hallelujah'. Hallelujah means "praise the Lord!" It is right that we should be praising the Lord for our morning coffee or sunny days, but it should not become a cute little trend of people playing pick 'n' mix, taking bits of Jesus when it helps to grow online content with more followers with "Sunny Days hallelujah." and in the next moment using his name as a curse word when something goes wrong.

I've not seen anyone using this trend to speak like Habakkuk yet, by saying hallelujah when "The fig tree does not bud [...] the olive crop fails [...] there are no sheep in the pen" Habakkuk says, "Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Saviour." Is Jesus just a god of easy things? After he lost everything, Job said "The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised." Painful days "Hallelujah ." Jesus is worthy of our worship in all times, not just when things are easy. We can't play pick 'n' mix with Jesus, by putting only what we want into the cup of Jesus. Don't play pick 'n' mix with something that affects your eternal salvation and damnation. Jesus is the only hope of salvation, so we must believe in the true, full Jesus.

The Errors of Missing. Jesus is "the one who came by water and blood". When Mary visited her cousin Elizabeth, John leaped in Elizabeth's womb and was filled with the Spirit because Jesus (God) was in Mary's womb. He was born of water*; fully man. Jesus was not just an ethereal spirit, he was a real man of flesh and bone, capable of being baptised in real water and he was still God when he died. He was still the sinless second person of the Trinity who died not for his own sin but as a substitutionary death for all who trust in him. He bore the sins of others upon that cross and, therefore, Jesus's shed blood "purifies us from sin" (1:7). "For there are three that testify: the Spirit, the water and the blood; and all three are in agreement." You can only bring a case to court on the testimony of 2 or 3 witnesses. John appealed to the water, the blood and the Spirit: a strong rebuttal

In my previous job I regularly had to go to the criminal courts. As I got up in the witness box I was given a Bible while I read, "I swear by Almighty God that the evidence I shall give shall be the

truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth”, Then I could give my evidence. There are many people who swear by 'the affirmation, “I do solemnly, sincerely and truly declare and affirm that the evidence I shall give shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.” Christians swear by the person of truth, the giver of truth. Jesus said, “I am the Way, The Truth...” But when you take God out of it, you have no truth. That is why the affirmation doesn't even come close to describing the truth because truth is found in God alone. When John says it is the Spirit who testifies, he is calling upon God's character to affirm this truth. The Holy Spirit is the affirming truth of Jesus Christ alongside the water and the blood. (Jn15:26) Now this may all seem like splitting hairs but what we believe about Jesus, is really very important. If you get it wrong, then over time you end up miles away from the real Jesus. If you affirm that Jesus came by water and not by blood then you end up with a view of Jesus that is not far from how Muslims view Jesus. In the centre of Birmingham in New Street, you will see at least 2 or 3 shops promoting Islam often with big signs saying “We believe in Jesus too.” They do believe in Jesus, but it's a pick and mix Jesus. Virgin birth, yes; Messiah, yes; Prophet, yes; son of God, No; Divine, no; crucified, no! If Jesus is not divine there can be no sinless, sacrificial death. If Jesus came by the blood only and not by water, then you lose the humanity of Christ and there can be no substitutionary sacrifice. Jehovah's witnesses view Jesus in this way. They believe Jesus is Michael the Archangel who was transferred into Mary's womb. Like Christians, Jehovah's Witnesses believe Jesus' death provides the basis for salvation and reconciliation with God but teach that Jesus was raised from the dead as an immortal spirit rather than in the same body that died so there can be no physical resurrection for us.

Not only are the consequences of 'pick 'n' mix' too high but we don't have any right to do that. Who are we to treat Jesus like a foam shrimp or a cola bottle? How dare we! John says “He did not come by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth.” We don't have the right to play pick 'n' mix with Jesus because the Spirit is truth and we'd be meddling with truth.

The Glory of It All. Misunderstanding Christ has eternal consequences. God's revelation of himself is in our language. It isn't cryptic. There isn't a code to crack. 'The Holy Spirit guides us into all truth'. (Jn 16:13) So I ask you, are you reading your Bible? Are you reading it to enjoy God so that doctrine helps us delight in Jesus and to grow in our theological understanding that points us Christward, not manward. When we don't play pick 'n' mix with Jesus and we take all that the Bible says about him, we end up with glorious truth. Jesus, God in heaven, knows what you're feeling, but also knows what it feels like to feel what you're feeling. God is not abstract. We can come to him where we are because he came to us where we are.

There is a Christian rapper called Shai Linne who penned these lines:

By faith, we believe this amazin' Jesus
Who made Uranus and Venus, became a fetus
It's such a secret that few, if anybody knew it.
Months later, He's covered in amniotic fluid*
The subject of the gospels, praise of Apostles
Armed with eye sockets, armpits and nostrils
Who is this Jesus? God clothed in human weakness
Super sweetness and peace for the true believers
See the One who never tires, knocked out sleepin'
See the source of eternal joy, weepin'

If Jesus was never truly man then he could never have atoned for man. Only God can live a sinless life and therefore have none of his own sin to atone for. He satisfied the wrath of God (propitiation) against sin. Jesus is the only hope of salvation, so we must believe in the true Jesus. No 'pick 'n' mix' to be had here. We see his wonderful glory and find ourselves fully satisfied in him. Get to know all of Jesus. He is everything.