

“The Guy With the Cardboard Christ” sample #2
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Alan: *(Directly, with a sigh.)* Jerry, I hate to tell you this, but this Jesus of yours isn't real. He can't hear, or feel, or speak.

Jerry: *(Taking offense, his voice rises.)* He is *too*, real! Here! Thrust your hand into the wound in his side. Feel the nail prints in his hands! *(He pushes the cutout aggressively toward Alan's face, causing him to lean back with a grimace.)* Be not faithless, but believing, you doubting Thomas!

Alan: *(Pushing the cutout away from his face.)* Your faith is misplaced, Jerry. This flat piece of paper is worthless except for its recycle value!

Jerry: *(Jumping up in anger, holding the cutout with one hand and pointing at Alan with the other.)* Blasphemer! My Jesus will send you to hell for that!

Alan: *(Also standing.)* No, he won't. Your fake Jesus can't even walk by himself!

Jerry: *(Yelling.)* Jesus is *not* a fake!

Alan: I didn't say that Jesus is a fake. I said *this* is a fake Jesus! *(Grabs the cutout by the edge.)* Look! It's nothing but corrugated cardboard with a printed cartoon picture on it!

Jerry: *(Pulling it away.)* Not it's not! It's my Jesus! Let go of him!

Alan: *(Tugging on it with both hands.)* This is for your own good, man! Give up this nonsense. You're making a fool of yourself when you walk around with this stupid thing!

Jerry: *(Yanking it back.)* I'll never give him up! Never!

Alan: Let me have it!

Jerry: Leggo! Help! Help, this crazy man is stealing my savior!

*(With both of them pulling on it one last time, the cardboard **rips in half**, leaving each of them holding a part of it!)*

(A beat passes.)

Alan: *(With a regretful grimace at what he's done.)* Oops.

*(Jerry looks down at his half in shock, mouth gaping open and eyes wide. There is a silence as he tries to grasp the enormity of what has happened. Then, **he screams!**)*

Alan: *(Sincerely, holding his half of the cutout.)* I'm sorry.

(Jerry breaks down crying, holding the piece of cardboard in his arms, sinking to the ground.)

Jerry: *(In tears, he looks up at Alan.)* Look what you've done! You Judas! *(Hugs the ripped cutout in his arms as he looks down at it.)* Look what you've done.

Alan: *(Gently.)* I'm sorry. Jerry. Really, I didn't mean to rip it. But this has to prove to you that this Jesus wasn't real. *(Putting his half on the ground beside the bench, he kneels beside the sobbing Jerry and taps the cutout piece.)* Look, it's not dead. It was never alive. There's no need to grieve over it.

Jerry: *(Wiping his eyes with his sleeve, he sniffs and wipes his nose with it also.)* That's easy for you to say. You haven't just had your faith destroyed.

Alan: It was a misplaced faith, man. It would have done nothing for you. I just tried to help you see that.

(Laying down the ripped half beside the bench on the other half, Jerry then gets up and sits down on

the bench dejectedly.)

Jerry: *(Leaning over with his head in his hands.)* Thanks a lot, man. You're a regular Mother Theresa. What do you want, a medal?

(Alan sits down beside him.)

Alan: Jerry, listen to me...

Jerry: Listen to you? *Listen to you?* Why should I? So far, you've torn up my Jesus, you've debunked my faith, and showed me he wasn't ever real. I'm completely disillusioned. If I keep listening to you, I might just kill myself! *(Crosses arms and pouts.)* Happy now? I hope so. I really, really hope you're happy now. Why don't you go snatch some candy from a baby or something and get a real thrill?

Alan: *(Gently.)* Jerry, I'm not trying to shatter your faith, I just want it to be placed in the *real* Jesus.

Jerry: *(With surprise.)* I didn't think you believed in Jesus! You said he wasn't even real!

Alan: I do believe. Jesus **is** real, but this piece of cardboard *wasn't really him*. Where did you get that thing, anyway?

Jerry: It was part of an advertisement for last summer's Vacation Bible School class. They were going to throw it away but I found it, and saved it.

Alan: Well, there you go. You fell in love with an image of Jesus, not the actual person. And it was someone else's image, not even yours! Merely a promotional gimmick.

Jerry: *(Rubbing his temple.)* I'm really confused now.

Alan: It's like when someone... *(Makes "air quote" marks.)* ..."falls in love" with a movie star. They're infatuated with an image of them, that others have carefully crafted and projected for their own money-making purposes. But they've never met the real person, and they certainly don't have a relationship with them. It's not real love based on a personal knowledge, and time spent with them. It's make-believe, a fantasy.

Jerry: Okay, that makes sense. I heard a lot about the Lord, and I wanted to get closer to Him. But I didn't really know how to go about doing it.

Alan: A lot of people are the same way. They've heard about Him in sermons, maybe they've seen a movie about Him and even moved to tears by seeing how He suffered. But all they know is what they've been told, they don't really know Him. All they have is a two-dimensional perception of him in their minds that they hang on to, not the real person.

Jerry: *(Standing, walking forward slightly and rubs his chin thoughtfully.)* So all this time I was trusting in a Jesus that wasn't the real one?

Alan: *(Also standing, he comes up to stand slightly behind him at his shoulder.)* Exactly. But you're not alone. Quite a few other people believe in a fake, or false Jesus. They have accepted someone else's version, but he's not the one revealed in the Bible and preached by Paul and all the apostles. This "other Jesus" may be a respected prophet, or an incarnated angel, or one that denies and usurps the Trinity. There's no end to the deceptive representations. But, even if the Jesus being preached is the true one, the resurrected Redeemer, God Incarnate come in the flesh, there's a difference between believing *in* Jesus, and believing *on* Jesus. The difference is in knowing *about* Him as the Savior, and actually *knowing* Him *as* your Savior.

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