

King Jesus
Sign Title: The Lamb and the Nations

December 24, 2010

Good evening Faith E Free family, Merry Christmas! If you are a visitor, I would like to welcome you to our Christmas Eve service. My name is Kurt and I am one of the pastors. It is great to have you celebrating with us the birth of a king.

Jesus was called a king at his birth.

saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” Matthew 2:2 (ESV)

He was called a king at his death.

And over his head they put the charge against him, which read, “This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.” Matthew 27:37 (ESV)

The Bible says he will return to rule as ultimate king.

They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful.” Revelation 17:14 (ESV)

While Jesus is called king and the Bible says he will return as king, I have a question for you. Did he do anything kingly with his life on earth? Kings change things for many people, either making their life worse or much better. Did Jesus’ three years of ministry change anything or is his life nothing more than an interesting fact of history? Let’s find out.

When the Millennium was on the horizon, Newsweek ran a cover story titled, *2000 Years of Jesus: Holy Wars to Helping Hands - How Christianity Shaped the Modern World*. I want to read you a quote from that article.

By any secular standard, Jesus is also the dominant figure of Western culture. Like the millennium itself, much of what we now think of as Western ideas,

inventions, and values finds its source or inspiration in the religion that worships God in his name. Art and science, the self and society, politics and economics, marriage and the family, right and wrong, body and soul - all have been touched and often radically transformed by the Christian influence.”

While Jesus’ life was simple. His influence is stunning. One-third of the people on planet earth claim to worship Him. No king or army ever had as much influence on history as Jesus, the King in the manger. Let me show you what I mean.

Jesus and Children

The plight of children in the ancient world was horrendous. Child sacrifice and child abandonment were common. Only half of all children lived beyond age eight. It was not uncommon for people to simply discard healthy unwanted babies in the fields for wild animals to devour or they were picked up by people with the worst sort of character, who turned them into slaves or prostitutes.

The coming of Jesus made an huge difference for children. First, Jesus brought dignity to childhood because he was born as a child. In Jesus’ ministry, he loved children. He healed children. He said heaven was made for children. He said God would punish anyone who harmed a child. He laid his hands on children and prayed over them. He invited children to sit with him, when others were pushing them away.

Jesus said our identity as Christians is as adopted Children of God, with Jesus Christ as our elder brother. This placed unprecedented value on adopting children in Jesus’ day. In the first century Christians were known for their large families. They put their faith into practice and gathered the unwanted children

left in the fields and adopted them as their own. Then they told them about the adopting love of Jesus, so they could be adopted into the family of God.

This influence on society slowly changed it so that in Christian nations today children are much more valued, not despised as a nuisance.

Kids,... on Christmas morning,... you have a lot to thank Jesus for.

Jesus and Women

In many ancient cultures, and even in some contemporary ones, women were regarded as the property of their husbands. Even today in India, if a husband dies, his wife can be burned on his funeral pyre in a ceremony called *suttee*. The murder of infant girls, or raising them to be temple prostitutes, was common practice in India until the coming of Christian missionaries such as Amy Carmichael and William Carey.

The Bible teaches that while men and women are given equal value and worth before God, they are given different roles. This doesn't devalue women but elevates them. Jesus greatly elevated women in the culture of his day. He violated many social taboos when he gave women value. For example, he befriended a Samaritan woman at the well of Sychar. Jesus healed and cast demons out of women. Jesus used women as positive examples in his teaching in a day when they were the butt of jokes. Jesus taught women theology in a day when they were denied religious education. Two of Jesus' closest friends were women, Mary and Martha, whom he loved like sisters. Jesus' resurrection was even witnessed first by women, even though their testimony was not acceptable in that male dominated culture.

There are Biblical distinctions of the roles men and women play, such as Jesus only called men to be apostles. That didn't mean Jesus didn't accept women into his circle of friends and value them as his disciples. The Bible tells us there were many disciples who were women and many highly valued women in the early church.

Jesus elevated the value of women. His influence is felt by every woman today as the influence of value upon women changed society. Ladies, you have a lot to thank King Jesus for this Christmas.

Jesus and Education

Jesus made an unparalleled difference in education. Christians are people of the Bible, as Christianity spread, so has language, translation, education and literacy. Many of today's languages were first set into writing by missionaries seeking to translate the Bible into the native language of a people group. Christians started the first European universities in cities like Paris and Bologna. A Christian named Johannes Gutenberg invented the printing press for the purpose of printing Bibles and Christian literature.

In America, from 1620 to 1837, virtually all education was private and Christian. The school systems of the United States began with a Christian orientation and remained that way for 217 years. Almost every one of the first 123 colleges and universities in the United States was Christian in origin. That includes Yale, William and Mary, Brown, Princeton, NYU, and Northwestern. Harvard was started by a donation of money and books from the family of Rev.

John Harvard after he died. Dartmouth was founded to train missionaries to the American Indians.

To give you an idea of how strong Jesus' influence is on education, check out these statistics.

- Non-Christian nations like China and India have a literacy rate ranging between zero and 20%.
- Primarily Catholic nations have a literacy rate of 40% to 60%.
- Protestant nations have a literacy rate of 94% to 99%.

This Christmas, thank king Jesus for your education. If it hadn't been for people with a passion to give you the gift of reading the Bible so we could read the story of Jesus for ourselves, we might not have an education.

Jesus and Medicine.

In the pre-Christian Rome, hospitals were only for soldiers, gladiators, and slaves. Sadly, laborers and the poor had no medical options.

Jesus transformed this. Jesus performed many healings and was called, "The Great Physician." As a result of how Jesus transformed hearts and lives, Christians reached out and showed compassion to the hurting. In A.D. 325, at the Council of Nicaea, it was decreed that hospitals were to be established wherever there was a Christian church. This tradition continues in our day as many of our hospitals have Christian origins. The Red Cross continues its medical ministry, thanks to the founding donations of that organization by the Christian Henri Dunant.

Jesus and America.

We owe much of our country's success to Jesus. As a general rule, it is accepted that our nation was founded as an experiment in religious freedom by

devout Christians. The inauguration of our first president, George Washington, included him getting on his knees to kiss the Bible before leading the Senate and House of Representatives to an Episcopalian church for a two-hour worship service. While not all the founding fathers were Christians, they were greatly influenced by the Bible, the book about Jesus. In fact 34% of the founding fathers citations in books, pamphlets, articles and other works are from the Bible.

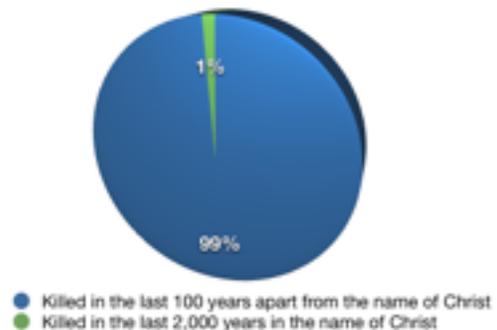
Among the more practical benefits of Jesus' influence upon our country are: The rule of law, the equality of all citizens, inalienable rights granted to us by God and individual liberty. These can all be traced back to the Bible, the book about Jesus. The Christian belief in human sinfulness helped bring about the separation of government into three branches in an effort to avoid unchecked power in the hands of sinners.

While I am not saying we should arrogantly argue that our nation is better than others, we should humbly thank God because many of the freedoms we enjoy would not have been ours if it were not for King Jesus. He created the Christian framework around which many of our national values were woven.

What about atrocities in Jesus' name?

Of course, I want to be honest. History tells us there were misguided people who have done a fair amount of damage in Jesus' name. I have always wondered how much damage have they done? I did a little research this week to

What about Atrocities in Jesus' Name?



find out. During the twentieth century alone approximately 170 million people were killed at the hands of other human beings. 130 million of those were killed at the hands of those holding an atheistic ideology, like Stalin, Hitler and Mao. In addition, you could add over 1 billion people that were killed in the womb of their mother in the twentieth century alone.

To keep things brief, let me summarize the results of my research. In two thousand years of history, taking into account the inquisitions, the Salem witch trials, the crusades and everything else I can find. I calculate roughly seventeen million were killed in the name of Christ in the last two thousand years. Nobody calls them heroes, nobody applauds their zeal. Compare that to 1,170,000,000 that were killed *in this century alone* apart from the name of Christ. I know I am comparing apples to oranges because one statistic is based on the last 2,000 years and the other is based on only the last one hundred years. It does give us some rough calculations. In the last 2,000 years less than 1/10th of one percent of the people who have lost their lives at the hand of someone else had it done to them in the name of Jesus. That is a very small percentage. In two thousand years of history, much more good was done in the name of Christ than evil by the misguided zealots. Jesus truly did change history and he changed it for the better.

Conclusion

Jesus never wrote a book, but the library of congress has more books about him than any other historical figure. He never ran for office, but more people have chosen him as their leader than anyone else who ever lived.

Probably the most startling difference Jesus makes is in not in world history, but in our personal histories. Jesus didn't come to change world history, those were just bonus'. He came to change your history and mine. The reason Jesus God fused himself with a human body was so that he could live a sinless life, die on a cross in our place for our sins. If we confess our sin to him, repent of them and ask Jesus to be our king, he will forgive us of our sin, restore us to a relationship with God. He will give us the Holy Spirit to guide us and comfort us. Billions of people on this planet have a personal history that is changed because they got on their knees and asked Jesus to be their king.

As I close, I am inviting you to become one of them. Jesus changed world history, he can change your history, ask the king in the manger to be the king of your life.

Prayer

Jesus, thank you for being so much more than just a baby born in a manger. I ask you to forgive me of my sin. Thank you for coming to die on the cross to die in my place for my sins. Thank you that you did it all and that all I need to do is to ask you to be my king, ask you to forgive me of my sin... and you will. As my savior and my king, I want to follow you as the leader of my life from this day forward. You changed world history, this Christmas, I ask you to change my history. I ask this in the name of Jesus, Amen.



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