

Christmas Sermon 2016 What If Jesus Was Never Born?

Today is the day that most people in the world are celebrating the birth of one referred to as Jesus the Christ. There is a movement in our culture to try and remove Jesus from the hearts and minds of each and every soul. Some of the larger cities in our country willingly display other religious symbols, but balk the sight of a Christian cross on public property. We have major department stores throughout the land that are taking the name of “Christ” out of the word “Christmas” because of their deep desire to be secular. These atheistic, humanistic, socialist, God hating, sin loving secularists would like us to pretend that Jesus was never born.

Would we want to live in a world in which Jesus never was born? To appreciate how Jesus has changed the world, let us take a trip through back through history and see what the world was like before the teachings of Jesus. Though the greatest impact on the world that Jesus made is the fact that He offers eternal life, sometimes it is necessary to engage one in the non-salvation arguments for Jesus in order to open debate.

Before Jesus was born, the value of human life was much less.

For years the ungodly have been making the argument that the world can hold a moral standard void of the teachings of Jesus and the Bible. Much of what we see in the malicious attacks from the media on Christianity is an attempt to rid Christ from the lives of society. **In reality the teachings of Jesus have changed the value of life more than any other in history.** Did you know that before Jesus entered the picture that things were far worse in our world concerning the value of life?

A) The Value of Child

Did you know in the ancient world, sacrifice of children was common? Before the Jews entered the promise land with the first teachings of the Bible, being a child was a risky situation. In the land of Canaan, archeologists have unearthed the mass graves of hundreds of sacrificed children. Archeologists who excavated the ruins of Ashtoreth, the wife of the god Baal, found during the times of Ahab, that people sacrificed thousands of babies as indicated by their burned skeletons.

This was not just a Middle East phenomenon, but a worldwide catastrophe. In Greece and Rome, abandonment was commonplace. If a Roman father did not want his newborn child, he would simply drop the child off in the wilderness to be eaten by wild animals or picked up by perverts. Even worse, if the child survived infancy, he was considered the property of the father and could be killed for whatever reason. The mortality rate of a child born and reaching the age of eight was nearly 50%. The Romans erected certain high places where infants would be left to die of exposure. Do you recall the callousness of Pharaoh and Herod ordering hundreds of babies killed simply out of paranoia (Ex 2, Mt 2)?

We say this could never happen today, but the evidence in Anti-Jesus countries say otherwise. If you were to go to India or China, you will find the bodies of children floating rivers and streams or laying in a ditch. Their desire to have baby boys instead of baby girls is so great, there has been a major shift in the male/female population in recent years through infanticide and abortions.

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Speaking of abortions, in last century there were over one billion abortions performed worldwide. Right after the wall fell in the communist and Godless nations, do you remember the conditions of the orphanages? How dare we pretend that Humanism has something better to offer than the teachings of Jesus when it comes to the lives of children! The more we push out the teachings of Jesus from our society, the worse it is for children. We have seen the child abuse rates rising in our country, the child murder rate has risen, the neglect has risen, the atrocities to children have risen all while running from the values of Jesus Christ. Jesus taught contrary to the way of the world.

Did you know by the third century, abortion and infanticide disappeared from the Roman Empire? A letter to Diognetus from the second century curiously states that Christians “*marry... beget children; but they do not destroy their offspring.*” The implication here is that killing children was normal except with the Christians. History shows that over the following two centuries in Rome, the situation completely changed. Why? It is because Christianity had changed the hearts of men and women of the Empire. Children now had a chance in life, but of course, it would not have occurred had the teachings of Jesus and the Bible been born like the secular souls in our country would like to have it.

B) The Value of Woman

One of the largest groups of God haters in the country today is the National Organization of Women (NOW). In their rallies and their writings, they ridicule the teachings of the Bible and Jesus Christ as hostile to their liberation. They present Jesus as the Master of suppression. They also believe that the world would be a better place if Jesus would have never been born. Let us look at the world of a woman prior to the coming of the words of Jesus and the Bible and see if they are right.

A woman of a couple thousand years ago was a second class citizen. She was considered property that could be disposed of at will. Most of the world held women just above cattle. Most regions of the world had at the most two girls in a family and if there were more and they were not wanted, they would be set out for the wolves, thrown in the river or buried in the dirt floor of the house they were born in. If the unwanted young girls were lucky enough to survive childhood, many would be sold into prostitution to make a few funds for the family.

In heathen India prior to missionary influence, a widow was commonly expected to be burned alive on the fire of her husband's cremation, a custom called *suttee*. This word translated meant “good woman”. In other words, it was good for a woman to be burned alive in following her husband into death. Can you imagine the cruelty of taking the widows of a congregation and burning them alive? They had no problem with it, but for the Christian it is considered savage.

Women could be divorced for about any reason and be forced out into the street because they couldn't own property. However, Jesus came into the world and taught a different way for the woman.

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- Jesus elevated the woman as the “bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh” (Gen 2:23).
- He said a husband could not put his wife out in the street simply because he wanted another (Matt 19:9).
- We as Christians are told in the Bible to have a lay down our life love for the wife (Ephesians 5:28; Colossians 3:19).
- We are to treat women as a weaker and precious vessel to not hinder our prayers (1 Pet 3:7).
- Jesus was not afraid to assist hurting women (Matt 9:20), reach out to needy women (Matt 15:22), comfort women who were outcasts (Luke 7:44; John 4:7).
- Jesus and his followers reached out to honor the widows of the world (1 Tim 5:3; Acts 6; James 1:27).

Charles Spurgeon in the last century wrote of a Hindu woman commenting on the Bible to a missionary: “Surely your Bible was written by a woman.” “Why” the missionary asked. “Because it says so many kind things for women. Our pundits never refer to us but in reproach.” Is there any doubt this Hindu woman would see these appreciable qualities of the teachings of Jesus and not fall in love with them?

C) The Value of the Elderly

Prior to the coming of Jesus, the aged in this world were not always so well off. Though the Chinese and Japanese worshipped their elderly, they didn’t begin to provide for them when in need until Christian influence came into the picture. Eskimos commonly would send their elderly out to sea on an ice floe when they could not keep up in everyday life. Many tribes of the earth would execute the older more feeble men and women of the group. Jesus changed all that for His focus was that of the Father’s.

- The book that Jesus endorses says that we need to respect the aged. Lev 19:32 *You shall rise up before the grayheaded, and honor the aged, and you shall arevere your God; I am the LORD.*
- We are to learn from the examples of elderly (Titus 2).
- We are to be respectful to the older man and woman as a father or mother (1Tim 5:1-2)
- God wants us to following their maturity and experience (1 Tim 3).
- Jesus taught us to honor our mother and father regardless of the age (Mt 19:19).
- Jesus taught us to take care of elderly parents (Mt 15:5).
- He showed us to reach out to the widows through example and teaching (Mt 23:14; Lk 7:12; 1Tim 5; James 1:27)

What do we see in our society as the nation pulls away from Christ? Things are becoming worse for the elderly of our country. Is it any wonder that euthanasia is becoming popular? Is it difficult to believe that our government makes policies that cut the cost of Medicare by \$500 billion over the next ten years? Is it any surprise that the care in our nursing homes is spiraling down? Is it any surprise that the older people of society are portrayed by the society as stupid and out of touch? If Jesus would have never been born, the aged in our world would have it far worse.

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D) The Value of a Slave

Did you know that prior to the coming of Christ, most of the world's population were slaves? Half of the Roman Empire was in slavery when Jesus was in his earthly ministry. Three fourths the population of Athens were slaves. Slavery was perfectly acceptable up to that point because there was no mechanism in place to free them.

Did you know the common law of the day permitted you the right to kill a slave for any reason? Did you know in ancient Athens, the testimony of a free man in the courts was admitted under oath, but the testimony of a slave could only be admitted under torture? Did you know in Rome, if the master of a house was murdered, all the slaves would have to be put to death as well? Did you know when one of the Pharaohs of Egypt died, his slaves were buried alive in the tomb with him?

Slavery has always thrived where God is pushed out of society. Though we read about slavery in the Old Testament, there were provisions such a Jubilee meant to make them free. While there was slavery in this country, many African societies practiced brutal slavery through kidnapping from other tribes. This only changed after Jesus was preached to them. In fact, if you study up on the history of slavery in the world, you will find that Christianity is by far the greatest influence to the decline.

Jesus taught a message of freedom. Christianity taught slave owners not to abuse, but to love the slaves.

- Colossians 4:1, Masters, grant to your slaves justice and fairness, knowing that you too have a Master in heaven.
- Ephesians 6:9, And, masters, do the same things to them, and give up threatening, knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.
- Philemon 16, Onesimus was "...no longer as a slave, but more than a slave, a beloved brother..."

The New Testament Christian principle was for the masters and slaves to share a common bond in Christ. 1 Corinthians 12:13, *"For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit."*

Christianity is the highest form of freeing a man for as Rom 6:17-18 *"But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness."*

In 1844, H.L. Hastings visited the Fiji Islands. While there, he found that the price of life was quite cheap. You could buy a human being for \$7.00 or one musket. This price was actually less than for a cow. Once you bought a slave, you could work him to death, beat him to death, starve

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him to death or even eat him according to the laws of the land. Upon returning a number of years later, he found the situation had changed. No longer could you buy a human being for \$7.00. In fact, you could not buy one for seven million dollars. Why? This is because in those short years, the Bible and Jesus Christ were introduced to the natives. From the study of it, the islanders discovered the priceless value of life, yes even that of a slave.

If we choose to ignore that Jesus came into the world and changed it for everyone, then are we prepared to face the consequences? When we seek to free ourselves from Jesus Christ, we once again will become slaves to sin and all the fallout that accompanies it. It's not too late, we can make a difference. We might be asking "How can I change the world?" The first thing that needs to be done is submission to Jesus Christ. Jesus said in John 8:34-36, *Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin. And the slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever. If therefore the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed."*

This freeing process occurs at baptism. Galatians 3:27-28, *For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*