

THE GOOD NEWS OF JESUS CHRIST

WHO IS JESUS CHRIST?

The life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ has so changed the world that even time itself is divided between the years before his birth (BC: "Before Christ") and after His birth (AD: Latin for "Year of our Lord:). Dr James Allan Francis, in his story, One Solitary Life, explained how Jesus Christ has had more impact on history for good than any other person who ever lived. He wrote:

He was born in an obscure village
The child of a peasant woman
He grew up in another obscure village
Where he worked in a carpenter shop
Until he was thirty when public opinion turned against him
He never wrote a book
He never held an office
He never went to college
He never visited a big city
He never travelled more than two hundred miles
From the place where he was born
He did none of the things
Usually associated with greatness
He had no credentials but himself

He was only thirty three

His friends ran away
One of them denied him
He was turned over to his enemies
And went through the mockery of a trial
He was nailed to a cross between two thieves
While dying, his executioners gambled for his clothing
The only property he had on earth When he was dead
He was laid in a borrowed grave
Through the pity of a friend

Nineteen centuries have come and gone
And today Jesus is the central figure of the human race
And the leader of mankind's progress
All the armies that have ever marched
All the navies that have ever sailed
All the parliaments that have ever sat
All the kings that ever reigned put together

Have not affected the life of mankind on earth
As powerfully as that one solitary life

C.S. Lewis, a professor at Oxford and Cambridge Universities, and a one time atheist, had this to say about Jesus Christ in his book *God in the Dock*, "What Are We to Make of Jesus Christ?"

"What are we to make of Christ? There is no question of what we can make of Him, it is entirely a question of what He intends to make of us. You must accept or reject the story.

"The things He says are very different from what any other teacher has said. Others say, 'This is the truth about the Universe. This is the way you ought to go,' but He says, 'I am the Truth, and the Way, and the Life.' He says, 'No man can reach absolute reality, except through Me. Try to retain your own life and you will be inevitably ruined. Give yourself away and you will be saved.' He says, 'If you are ashamed of Me, if, when you hear this call, you turn the other way, I also will look the other way when I come again as God without disguise. If anything whatever is keeping you from God and from Me, whatever it is, throw it away... Come to Me everyone who is carrying a heavy load, I will set that right. Your sins, all of them, are wiped out, I can do that. I am Re-birth, I am Life. Eat Me, drink Me, I am your Food. And finally, do not be afraid, I have overcome the whole Universe.' That is the issue."

IS JESUS CHRIST REALLY GOD?

In his book *Mere Christianity*, C.S. Lewis deals with this question. He writes,

"I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: 'I am ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept His claim to be God.' That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher... You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him...or you can fall at His feet and worship Him as God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to."

THE GOSPEL, OR GOOD NEWS of JESUS CHRIST

The Gospel (meaning "Good News") was beautifully summarized by Jesus Himself:

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved" (John 3:16-17).

Human beings have misused the freedom that God has given them. How this began is explained in the third chapter of Genesis, the first book of the Bible. All men have misused their freedom and sinned, except one. The only person who has ever been without sin was the Lord Jesus Christ.

Despite our sins and our rebellion against Him, God still loved us and was determined to send His Son into the world to save us and bring us back to Him.

To prepare the world for the coming of His Son, He chose the people of Israel. You can read about that in the first part of the Bible, which is called the Old Testament.

When the time He had chosen had come, God chose a young woman named Mary to be the Mother of His Son. She belonged to the people of Israel. When Mary had consented to bear God's Son, she miraculously conceived through the power of the Holy Spirit. When the child was born she named Him Jesus as she had been instructed. Jesus means "the Lord Saves."

Jesus was born in a stable in the little town of Bethlehem, where His Mother Mary and His foster father Joseph had to stay because there was no room for them in the inn.

When Jesus was thirty years old He was baptized by His cousin, John the Baptist, and He began His public ministry. For three years He preached the Good News, healed the sick, forgave sins, taught, and even raised the dead. He chose twelve men to be His Apostles ("Sent Ones"). They were to be His closest disciples and witnesses of His resurrection, and were to preach His message to the world and to govern the Church He would found.

After three years of ministry Jesus was arrested, condemned, tortured, nailed to a cross, died and was buried. But that was not the end of the story.

On the third day He rose again from the dead. He appeared many times to His disciples, taught them, and ate food with them to show that He was not a ghost or a vision. After forty days He ascended into heaven before the eyes of the Apostles so they would understand that He was returning to His Father in heaven.

After this experience the apostles never doubted what they had seen, heard and experienced. All but one, John, would die as martyrs. John would not be martyred, but he would suffer exile and persecution. They could have saved their lives by simply denying Christ, but not one ever did. Not one.

The Apostle Paul wrote, "I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you... that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures" (I Cor. 15:1, 3-4).

St. John the Apostle wrote, "He [Jesus] was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came unto His own, and His own did

not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His Name” (John 1:10-12).

Are you ready to receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour and to follow Him as a member of His Church? He wants to have a life changing relationship with you. We are here to help. “And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved” (Acts 2:47). Come and see. Sunday Services are at 10:00 AM. The Orthodox Church (established AD 33) welcomes you!

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