

Last week we learned of the setting for the letter of Jude. False teachers were creeping into the churches and spreading their compromising ideas, luring people to follow them in their sensual ways. In the fourth verse Jude writes, *<sup>4</sup> For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.* Jude 1:4 (ESV) They refuse to yield to Jesus as Lord of their life.

In our day this has become so prevalent that these ungodly ones no longer have to creep in unnoticed. Denominations have embraced the denial of Jesus as our only Master and Lord. Sensuality is sanctioned as natural and healthy. The physical and emotional consequences are known but ignored. The Scriptures that clearly address these issues are explained away as cultural ignorance of that day. In doing so, they deny our only Master and Lord Jesus Christ. They even go so far as to deny the virgin birth and deity of Jesus. His death in our place they call a barbaric thought.

I've never understood why those that think this way gather and call themselves Christians, except possibly to justify their own behavior including idolatry of self. They will tell you of the horrors of Christianity, like the Inquisition and the Crusades, and point to them as evidence of the evils of taking the Bible seriously. It would be bad enough if this was just the standard drivel that is taught as philosophy in higher education, but it is in our seminaries as well. It is well past time to do what Jude was telling the church to do in verse 3. *<sup>3</sup> Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.* Jude 1:3 (ESV)

I wanted to continue on with Jude but I find it necessary to appeal to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints. Let's look at the facts, and I hope you retain some of them so that you are equipped to contend for the faith. I'm taking most of them from a well-researched book by D. James Kennedy, *What If Jesus Had Never Been Born?* I would recommend that you read the book. If the world understood the freedom and advancements that they enjoy because of Christ, they would in gratitude be praising His name every day, as well we should.

**First we must understand what the world was like at the time Jesus was born.** Life was cheap. It was only among Jews that people were thought to be made in the image of God and therefore of infinite worth. As for the rest of the world, slavery, child sacrifice, and the abuse of women was commonplace. The city of Carthage had a temple with a cemetery filled with the bodies of babies that had been sacrificed. Roman families often left unwanted children out in the woods for animals to devour or threw them in rivers. There were also ledges in some cities where newborns were left to die. Since inheritances were divided amongst the children, the family thought the only way to stay wealthy and

influential was to eliminate all but one or two heirs. About two-thirds survived birth but that did not mean they could not be killed later on. A Roman father was allowed to kill his own children and in some cases it was even considered an act of beauty. (p 11)

In Canaan the preferred sacrifice to the gods Baal and Molech were babies cremated alive. Graves of thousands of these sacrifices have been unearthed by archeologists. **The most dangerous time for a person in that age was the time of one's birth, just as it is today!**

Some believe that Rome eventually converted to Christianity not because of Constantine's vision but rather because the Christians were rescuing abandoned babies, most of which were girls. The only place a Roman man could find a chaste girl was in Christian homes. The girl's father would not give his daughter in marriage unless the man showed genuine signs of conversion. Eventually Christianity had taken over the empire through the rescue of the unwanted.

In the sixth century, the Christian emperor Justinian made infanticide and abortive drugs illegal and punishable as the offence of murder. Today there are over 3000 crisis pregnancy centers in the U.S. helping thousands of pregnant women, as well as organizations like Young Lives.

**Slavery** in the ancient world was common place. Conquered peoples were often sold into slavery. Half of the population of the Roman Empire was slaves! A slave was considered the same as a tool, like a scythe or plow. If you wear it out, you can throw it away. They could be tortured at will, and in fact it was encouraged if they were giving testimony in a court. If a master of a Roman household was murdered, all his slaves were put to death. Female slaves were given to male guests for the night. They had no rights at all. The children belonged to the master to kill or sell or raise up as a slave.

Christianity is often criticized because the New Testament tells slaves to be submissive to their Masters. (Ephesians 6:5-9) But those same critics neglect to inform us that masters were told to treat their slaves as brothers (Philemon 1:15-16) and were warned not to threaten them because God was their Master. Nor do they emphasize that it was the admission of slaves to communion that ended slavery in Europe, and that it was Christians who demanded and fought for slavery to cease in England and America. You can still see churches in the Eastern part of the U.S. that have bullet holes from being attacked for hiding slaves.

**Entertainment** in that day was watching people die. Gladiators were slaves who fought to the death for the entertainment of Roman audiences. Trajan had 10,000 gladiators killed in only four months. Christians also faced gladiator and beasts for insisting Jesus as Lord. Do you know how it finally came to an end? Some historians will tell you it was because of financial inability to continue the cost, but that is only part of the story. In the fifth century, a monk, Telemachus, horrified by the butchery, jumped into the arena and pleaded for the bloodshed to stop. The mob, presumably nominal Christians, stoned him for interfering

**Commented [notes1]: Ephesians 6:5-9 (ESV)**

<sup>5</sup> Slaves, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ,

<sup>6</sup> not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart,

<sup>7</sup> rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man,

<sup>8</sup> knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free.

<sup>9</sup> Masters, do the same to them, and stop your threatening, knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him.

**Commented [notes2]: Philemon 1:15-16 (NIV)**

<sup>15</sup> Perhaps the reason he was separated from you for a little while was that you might have him back for good— <sup>16</sup> no longer as a slave, but better than a slave, as a dear brother. He is very dear to me but even dearer to you, both as a man and as a brother in the Lord.

with their entertainment. The Emperor then ordered the games to cease and enrolled Telemachus among the martyrs.

Jesus made a distinction between human life and that of animals. He said we were of much more value to God than sparrows. (Matthew 6:26) But to numerous cannibal tribes, men were no more than another meal and eating them was considered a way to gain the dead person's prowess. In many ancient cities the dead were cooked outside the city walls and eaten by the poor. From Fiji to South American jungles to Africa, cannibalism has been eliminated by Christianity. Even Darwin recognized this fact when he suggested that if you are shipwrecked on an island, you better hope Christianity has preceded you.

Even the treatment of animals has been affected by Christianity. PETA won't tell you about that! The Proverbs tell us that the righteous man regards the life of his beast. (Proverbs 12:10) The Levitical Law demanded that farm animals have a day of rest as well. (Deuteronomy 5:14) Of course our society today has taken this to an extreme saying Christianity's exaltation of man is the reason for the extinction of species. Some even suggest that phasing out the human race will solve every problem on earth, social and environmental.<sup>(source)</sup> All I have to say to that is, "If you really believe that, then why are you still here?" Without Jesus, life is not just cheap; it is considered a scourge on the planet.

Before Christ, there were no organized charitable efforts for the poor. Polybius reported that "in Rome no one gives anything away if he can help it". Jesus was the source for the great charitable efforts that continue today around the world. He is the reason for Hope Cottage, Old Town mission, Mother Theresa and medical missionaries.

How did Jesus change man's attitude toward the poor? It was with a couple of stories. One is found in Luke 10:25-37. It is the story of the Good Samaritan. Even many who have never picked up a Bible have heard of the priest and Levite that avoided the beaten man on the road to Jericho, as well as the Samaritan that stopped and cared for him. Another that was even more effective in changing attitudes toward the poor and needy was Jesus' description of His return. In Matthew 25:40 He told that crowds that as they helped the least and needy among them, they did it to Him and would be welcomed into His kingdom.

That is the reason that the Red Cross and Salvation Army were founded. They've help millions of disaster victims. It was even the source of a similar Muslim service, the Red Crescent, as they branched off from the Red Cross not wanting to be under the sign of the cross. James tells us that true religion that God accepts is to care for the orphan and widow. (James 1:27)

Surveys have shown that church attendees give more to charities outside their churches than the average person. Every year religious institutions contribute about \$19 billion to care for children and the elderly, education, health, food for the hungry, and housing for

**Commented [notes3]: Matthew 6:26 (NIV)**

<sup>26</sup> Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?

**Commented [notes4]: Proverbs 12:10 (ESV)**

<sup>10</sup> Whoever is righteous has regard for the life of his beast, but the mercy of the wicked is cruel.

**Commented [notes5]: Deuteronomy 5:14 (ESV)**

<sup>14</sup> but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter or your male servant or your female servant, or your ox or your donkey or any of your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates, that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you.

**Commented [notes6]:** Quoted in Paul English, "Animal Rights vs Human Rights," *Christian American*, March 1993, p.21

**Commented [notes7]: Luke 10:25-37 (ESV)**

<sup>25</sup> And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

<sup>26</sup> He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How do you read it?"

<sup>27</sup> And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself."

<sup>28</sup> And he said to him, "You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live."

<sup>29</sup> But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

<sup>30</sup> Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead."

<sup>31</sup> Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side.

<sup>32</sup> So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

<sup>33</sup> But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion.

<sup>34</sup> He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him.

<sup>35</sup> And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, "Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back."

<sup>36</sup> Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?"

<sup>37</sup> He said, "The one who showed him mercy." And Jesus said to him, "You go, and do likewise."

**Commented [notes8]: Matthew 25:40 (ESV)**

<sup>40</sup> And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'

**Commented [notes9]: James 1:27 (ESV)**

<sup>27</sup> Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.

**the homeless.** Churches volunteer an equivalent of \$6 billion a year in labor. They are also found to be the most cost effective charitable institutions in society. This church is exceptional in that regard as 25% of our income goes to missions. A large part of that goes to Sonshine Rescue Mission that feeds the poor and houses the homeless. Is there any reason an atheist would give anything to help another person in need? Why should they care about anyone else?

It was the work of Christians that **codified languages** in order to translate the Bible. Today the work continues under Wycliffe Bible Translations. Even the Cyrillic alphabet used by 200 million people was an invention of missionaries to the Southern Slavs. Modern printing by presses was the invention of Guttenberg who said he created it to make manifold the Bible. Our every day is filled with benefits of Christians that have gone before us that created for the glory of God.

Before Christianity, **education** was only for the elite. It was a seventeenth century Moravian bishop, Cominius, that the world knows as "the Father of Modern Education." Luther and Calvin also played large parts in making education for the masses a priority. The very institutions that are trying to tear down Christianity through indoctrination were originally founded by Christians who saw that the masses needed to be educated to understand the Bible. Yale, Harvard, and Princeton, as well as nearly every one of the first 123 colleges and universities were founded by Christians for Christian goals. Education in America was the responsibility of the church from the time of the earliest settlers until public education began 1837. Our nation has been under private Christian education longer than it has under public education. Before public education, the illiteracy rate was only 4 in 1000!

For decades our grammar school readers were written by a Presbyterian minister named William McGuffey. They directed the students to live for salvation - for eternal life with God in another world – a life goal connected closely to righteousness. The content focused first on religion, then morality, and last on knowledge. Six years after McGuffey's death they were severely secularized. (p.50)

What happened? In 1837, Horace Mann, a Unitarian who denied the Trinity and deity of Christ or the inspiration of Scripture, deplored the fact that education in America was in the hands of Christians. He became "the Father of Modern Public Education" by encouraging the state to run, operate and control education. His efforts did not become realized until John Dewey. Dewey was a professor at Columbia University. His school of education and philosophy become the foundation for twentieth century teacher-training institutions. He was the president of the American Humanist Association. He believed state run education was the solution to the problem that plagued America, Christianity. Very few realized the major shift that was taking place.

Dr. A. A. Hodge of Princeton could see it. He wrote that, "a centralized system of national education, separated from religion, as is now commonly proposed, will prove the most appalling engine for propagation of anti-Christian and atheistic unbelief, and of anti-social nihilistic ethics, individual, social and political, which this sin-rent world has ever seen." <sup>(source)</sup> The result has been that our illiteracy rate is approaching that of Zambia, 32 times what it was under Christian education.

**Commented [notes10]:** A.A. Hodge, *Popular Lectures on Theological Themes* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publications, 1887), p.283.

Hodge's words were prophetic, but the remnant has not given up. Christians are still educating in private schools and are the major source of education in many third world countries. This is one reason this church gives to local Christian education and to our students who are seeking to go to Christian Universities.

When the pastors in our city took out a full page advertisement inviting Christians who had been offended by the church to return and try it again, we got an interesting response in the mail. One person wrote that if we were educated we would not believe as we did. He certainly would have agreed with Mann and Dewey. He understood the education he received made Christianity out to be the problem in the world. In his view, we pastors just weren't educated enough.

I'm just beginning but I am running out of time (space). Let me briefly touch on few other areas where Christianity has profoundly altered the world. **The founding of our nation** was by people who were thoroughly Christian. You might question the Christianity of 2 of the 52 signers of the Declaration of Independence, but the rest are beyond doubt. My own ancestor was one of them, Benjamin Rush, a world famed physician. He was the founder of the American Bible Society. If you have any doubt as to their faith or if some were deists, read their last will and testament that declares their faith in Jesus as their Savior and only hope for eternal life!

Separation of powers came out of the understanding that all men are sinners. **(Romans 3:23)** Separation of church and state and freedom of religion was established so that the state would not enforce one denomination over all others. The founders knew from experience in England that a national religion results in corruption.

**Commented [notes11]:** Romans 3:23 (NIV)  
<sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

In the world of science, Christians are often seen as those who kept us in the Dark Ages. (A term no longer used by historians) In fact, most major advances in science came through believing scientists. The reformation birthed a scientific revolution as believers sought to understand the physical world by thinking God's thoughts after Him. "Alfred Whitehead and Robert Oppenheimer stressed that **modern science was born out of the Christian world view.**" <sup>(source)</sup> It was the combination of Greek reasoning and the understanding that God was a Creator of order and reason that caused the explosion in knowledge.

**Commented [notes12]:** Quoted from Francis Schaffer

Here is a list of devout Christians who founded whole fields of science: Kepler (Celestial Mechanics), Pascal (Hydrostatics), Newton (Dynamics and Calculus), Faraday

(Electromagnetics), Lister (Antiseptic surgery), Pasteur (Bacteriology), Fleming (Electronics), Boyle (Chemistry), Mendel (Genetics), Babbage (Computer Science) Their discoveries changed everything about our modern world. You wouldn't be enjoying the benefits of electricity, vaccinations, much of modern medicine, and many of the scientific advances if it weren't for these devout Christians. And as for the your car, Henry Ford thought the original McGuffey reader was so influential to his spiritual life that he had them reprinted for those who only read the secularized version.

I could go on and on, art, architecture music, accounting, hospitals, civilizing barbaric cultures, standards of justice, women's rights, and much more. Christianity is not the bane of the modern world. It is the source of what is good in it.

The secular humanist cries, "Yes, but what about the Inquisition and the Crusades?" When Christendom acts out of line with Christianity, it is not Christianity that is to blame. If Christendom were *more* Christian, that violence would not have happened. It was wrong, and was contrary to the teachings of Jesus who taught us to love our enemies. (Matthew 5:44) Many saints died under the Inquisition's quest to keep the Bible from the common people in their native language. Today, those who decry the Bible's influence on the common man hold up the Inquisition as a Christian failure, not realizing they more readily identify with those they are pointing to as examples of Christian evil.

The Crusades were similar in that many Crusaders were out to pillage and profit regardless of the faith of the victim. Though most were Muslims and Jews, there were many Christian victims as well. When Islam conquers in the name of Allah and forces their faith on others, they are acting in accord with their sacred book. If Christians were to do the same, they would be acting contrary to our sacred Book.

But perhaps the greatest change Jesus brought to the world is the change in the individual heart. That is why all the other advancements were possible. From violent thieves to selfish capitalists to drug addicted hookers, Jesus is the One that transforms the heart and washes it clean. He is the One that gives us genuine purpose and removes our guilt and shame. He is the real joy giver.

Nietzsche wrote: "The Christian Church has left nothing untouched by its depravity; it has turned every value into worthlessness, and every truth into a lie, and every integrity into baseness of soul."<sup>(source)</sup> Philosophy versus fact! He died of syphilis, a ranting lunatic in an asylum. Christian morality would have spared him that ugly death.

We need to contend for the faith with facts when we are speaking with people that have ears to hear. I am amazed today how many people will respond with a conviction of belief and are not bothered by the facts that refute those beliefs. We are in a cultural and ideological battle that is at the tipping point. Jude tells us to contend for the faith. Do it with gentleness and love; but whatever you do, don't remain silent. The truth is more powerful than a lie. The battle is won one heart at a time.

**Commented [notes13]:** Matthew 5:44 (ESV)

<sup>44</sup> But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

**Commented [notes14]:** F.W. Nietzsche, *The AntiChrist*, trans. By H.L. Mencken (Torrance, CA: The Noontide Press, 1980), p.180

### Questions

- 1 What was Jude asking of his readers?
- 2 How did the ancient world treat slaves, women, children, and the poor?
- 3 How did Christianity change each?
- 4 What helpful agencies came from Christianity?
- 5 What happened to education?
- 6 What role did Christianity play in founding our nation?
- 7 Why did they have separation of powers?
- 8 Why did they have freedom of religion?
- 9 What are some of the Christian discoveries?
- 10 What about the Crusades?