

Luke 2:1-7 — Jesus Changed Civilization, Arts, And Politics

December 3, 2023

Good morning, CrossWinds Church! If you are new, my name is Kurt. I am one of the pastors. We are grateful to have you.

This morning, we continue our Christmas series, “What If Jesus Was Never Born?” In this series, we are looking at some of the Christmas texts, then we moving from the coming of Jesus in biblical history to learn how the coming of Jesus changed world history. Many things in modern life are different because Jesus was born. Many of them are so obvious we miss them.

This morning, we will look at Luke 2:1-7, which describes the birth of Jesus. As we look at these verses, I want you to notice the harshness of the world into which Jesus was born. After that, we will see how Jesus’ birth civilized a barbaric world, changed the world of art, and even changed politics.

Jesus was born into a cruel world.

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. Luke 2:1–5 (ESV)

Joseph was engaged to Mary. The Gospel of Matthew tells us that when Joseph learned Mary was pregnant, and he knew he was not the father, he planned to divorce her quietly. An angel spoke to Joseph in a dream, telling him the child in Mary’s womb was not conceived by another man but by the Holy Spirit. Joseph was to take her as his wife. That is what he did.

Mary was almost 9 months pregnant when Caesar decreed that everyone would travel to the town of their family's origin for a census. Joseph and Mary were related to David, so they needed to travel from Nazareth to Bethlehem. Nazareth in Hebrew means *branch*. I like to think of Nazareth as the branch office of Bethlehem because history tells us other people from Bethlehem lived there.

I checked Google Maps. Today, traveling from Nazareth to Bethlehem is 1 hour and 56 minutes by car. In that day, it took a little longer. It is 100 miles. At 20 miles a day, it would be a 5-day journey. Twenty miles a day with a woman who was 9 months pregnant would not be much fun. Christmas cards usually picture Mary riding an animal. We don't know if that happened. It is possible she walked. It was a cruel, uncivilized world that people lived in. Life was hard.

And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. Luke 2:6–7 (ESV)

When they arrived in Bethlehem, there was no room for them to stay, even among family. Remember, they returned to Bethlehem for the census because that is where their family came from. There was no room in their family's home or public lodging. The only option was a stable. Those were the only accommodations available for a young pregnant woman about to give birth. After Mary gave birth to baby Jesus, she was forced to use an animal feeding trough as a crib.

While there are many things we could look at in these verses, I want to focus on one thing this morning. Notice the cruelty of the world into which Jesus

was born. No one had enough room in their home or compassion in their lives for Mary, Joseph, and baby Jesus.

Since Jesus was born, everywhere the good news of Jesus has gone, the world has become much more civilized and compassionate.

The birth of Jesus civilized the world.

Nothing in history compares to what Christianity has done and is still doing to civilize barbaric people. Nothing! Much of modern society's civilized attitudes and values come directly from our Judeo-Christian heritage. The farther we drift away from that heritage, the more uncivilized we will become.

Jewish Roots

Christian morality has its roots in Judaism and the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments, and other laws found in the Old Testament, gave the Jews a standard of morality that was light years ahead of the cultures around them. Abraham Lincoln said it this way.

The Bible is the greatest gift God gave to man. Apart from it ,we would not know right from wrong. — Abraham Lincoln

Jesus brought an even higher standard of morality than many Jews observed. Many of the Jews thought of the Ten Commandments as simply relating to their actions. Jesus told us that God cares about more than actions. He cares about our hearts.

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. Matthew 5:27–28 (ESV)

The spread of the Christian faith caused God's design for morality to spread to many cultures. Throughout history, many of the most barbaric tribes

and cultures were civilized by the good news of Jesus. Had Jesus never been born, we might still be drinking out of human souls like our ancestors did before they met Jesus.

The World Before Jesus

Some of the most vile societies surrounded the ancient Jews. The Canaanites worshipped gods like Moloch, Baal, and Ashtoreth (Baal's wife). Moloch was exceptionally cruel. His worshippers were required to sacrifice their children in the fire. The Bible references this and warns Israelites against it.

You shall not give any of your children to offer them to Molech,... Leviticus 18:21 (ESV)

Moloch was a bronze statue with a bullhead. The statue was placed over a fire and heated until it was scalding hot. Moloch had outstretched bronze hands formed into a



cup shape. You placed your children in his bronze cup-shaped hands that were superheated with fire, then you watched your baby scream in agony as it was scalded to death. This is why God told the Israelites not to mix with their neighbors. It also helps us understand why God told Joshua to wipe out the people of the Promised Land.

Baal was a god of sexuality and fertility. Temple prostitutes of both sexes were part of his worship. Henry Halley, in his writing on the ancient Canaanites, says their temples were centers of sexuality and child sacrifice. In contrast, the Jews had the Ten Commandments, which said, "Thou shalt not murder." They also said, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." Worship among the Canaanites

consisted of murder and adultery. This explains why God did not want his people to mix with the pagan nations around them. As I said, the Ten Commandments, as a standard of morality, were light years ahead of Israel's neighbors.

While the Canaanites were one of the most uncivilized and barbaric cultures, it didn't improve as time marched on.

Let's move beyond the Canaanites. The Syrians and Phoenicians had a goddess whose worship involved prostitution of both sexes. The Egyptians practiced homosexuality as part of their worship. As part of the worship of the Egyptian god Isis, the priests functioned as male prostitutes, engaging in sex with the men who came for worship. Sexual worship like this didn't just take place in Egypt but in other parts of the world, where under the names of Aphrodite or Venus, people worshiped the same god.

Let's move to the Greeks. The Greeks contributed many things to the world, but a higher standard of morality was not one of them. They created a philosophy called Epicureanism. It was quite popular at the time. Epicureanism claims the highest pursuit in life is to bring the fullest enjoyment to your senses. How do you think morality works out when the goal of people's lives is to enjoy any pleasure they want whenever they want? That is a recipe for anarchy.

Let's move from Greece to Rome. Rome, for all its advancements, was not a civilized place that valued human life. For sport, in the Colosseum, people would come to watch gladiators kill one another. They would come to watch wild animals be turned loose on defenseless slaves or prisoners of war. For entertainment, they laughed as people were torn apart and eaten alive. That was

Rome's version of weekend football. That is an uncivilized culture. For them, watching people die was fun.

The best way to understand how uncivilized Roman society became is to look at their leaders. There are around 12 Roman emperors in a row who were either homosexual or bisexual. Let's look at one whose name is familiar to most: the emperor Nero. He grew up with the finest of philosophical educations, yet he became one of the most disgusting men. He frequently visited brothels for sex, often in disguise. He was known to have a fondness for young boys, and after he was done with them, he either cruelly disfigured or murdered them. He took a mistress. When his wife objected, he killed her. When his mother objected to his mistress, he killed his mother. With resistance out of the way, he married his mistress. Then, one day, when she was in her last months of pregnancy and feeling emotional, she made the mistake of nagging him because he came home late from the races. He pushed her on the ground and began kicking her. He kicked her so hard and so long that he killed his son in her womb, and he killed her. He was the ruler of the Roman Empire. That was morality in the Roman world. This is the world into which Jesus was born.

Jesus Came

Into this cruel world and immoral world, Jesus was born. Jesus died on the cross. He rose from the grave. He offers forgiveness of sins and a new heart to all who trust in him. At that time, the church was born. The good news of Jesus began spreading in Jerusalem, Rome, and the ancient world. People were born

again. Their lives changed. Their hearts changed. Nobody was or is perfect except for Jesus, but the ancient world became a different place.

For the first 300 years after Christ's birth, Christians were persecuted. When Constantine became Roman Emperor in 306 A.D. and united the Roman Empire in 324 A.D., Christian morals and values started to change Roman society. Constantine banned gladiators from fighting to the death in 325 A.D. This practice occasionally continued until 404 A.D. when a monk named Almachius stepped into the arena to stop the senseless murders. The crowd stoned him to death. After that, fighting to the death was stopped once-and-for-all. Constantine banned crucifixion as a form of death for anyone in 337 A.D. He considered it too inhumane a way for anyone to die. Christian morality, based on the Ten Commandments and infused in people's hearts by the Holy Spirit, changed Roman society for the better. It civilized an uncivilized world. Those changes were not limited to Rome.

Civilizing the Barbarians

Christianity began spreading from Rome to the barbarian cultures in Europe that were attacking Rome. Many of those barbarians came from the Germanic tribes of the Goths, Franks, and the Saxons. They were fierce warriors. Before the fall of Rome, they pressed the limits of the Roman empire, attacking Roman outposts. When the barbarians conquered a Roman outpost, they killed every man, woman, and child. They burned everything to the ground.

Christian missionaries, at great risk to their lives, were sent from Rome to these barbaric warriors to learn their language and tell them about Jesus. One of

these missionaries was Augustine (not Augustine of Hippo). He brought the good news of Jesus to the Anglo-Saxons. Over time, these barbaric tribes, who were the ancestors of many of us, were civilized by the gospel.

The Vikings

The Vikings are one of the greatest examples of the transforming power of Jesus to bring civility to an uncivilized culture. They were particularly fierce warriors. They are the ancestors of the Scandinavians. In the ninth and



tenth centuries, the Vikings were known as marauders. They terrorized much of Europe's coastline. They would plant their crops in the spring, then raid up and down the coast of Europe in the summer, then return in the fall for harvest. The Vikings pillaged, raped, and killed the men, women, and children everywhere they went. Their warriors were so fierce they were known as the *berserkers*. This is where we get our phrase, "going berserk."

The good news of Jesus transformed their culture. The good news of Jesus gave Vikings new hearts as they turned from their sin and trusted in Jesus. They stopped their raids. In 1020 A.D., King Olav presided over the first national assembly in Norwegian history. At that time, he made Christianity the law of the land. He outlawed blood sacrifices, black magic, slavery, abortion, and the abandoning of newborns in the forest. He also outlawed polygamy. This happened because he was a Christian, as were many Scandinavians at that time.

Today, virtually every Norwegian, Dane, Swede, and even many British are descended from these Viking warriors. What changed their culture? It wasn't the Roman legions. It was Jesus. Had Jesus never been born, we might still be raiding, murdering, burning, and practicing black magic in Europe. We might still be drinking blood out of human skulls.

Mary Slessor of Calabar

Mary Slessor (1848-1915) was from Scotland. She became a Christian in her teens, and after serving in the slums of Dundee, she felt the call of God to serve as a missionary in Africa. In 1876, she left for Nigeria.



When she arrived, she heard that deep in the heart of Africa, around the area of Calabar, lived four million savage cannibals. They were so fierce that even government troops wouldn't enter the land. These 4 million cannibals were barbaric. For example, they murdered twins and the mother who gave birth to them. They believed the birth of twins happened because of a demon. No one could touch a twin and live. Half the population were slaves. When a man died, they would eat fifty slaves. Children were tied up on a leash and were considered no better than animals.

The plight of twins especially touched Mary's heart. The tribe abandoned twins in the forest to die. She had the chance to take some out of the woods and raise them in her home. People in the tribe were astonished to see that someone could touch a twin and live. Over many years, with the help of the twins she

raised, she was slowly accepted in their culture. She shared the good news of Jesus with them. One by one, the chiefs of various villages trusted Jesus, and their lives were changed. Many of their horrible customs went away. The murder of the twins stopped. The eating of slaves stopped. Boiling people in oil was stopped. Instead of eating their neighbor, they began to love their neighbor.

Without the birth of Jesus, none of that would have happened. We would be living in a world like ancient Rome where, for fun, we would gather to watch people die or be eaten alive. We would still be like the Saxons, Franks, and Goths, raiding, pillaging, and destroying people around us. We would be like the Ibo tribe, killing our twins instead of treasuring them.

Had Jesus never been born, many of us would still probably be drinking blood out of human skulls.

The birth of Jesus changed art.

You've probably seen them. They are in books and wall plaques. They are called the praying hands. They are based on a 500-year-old woodcut from Germany by a Christian artist named Durer (1471-1528).



Durer and his older friend were aspiring artists. They agreed that one would work while the other studied art and painting, after a few years, they would switch places. The older man insisted that Durer study art first. After a few years, when it came time to switch, Durer's friend's hands were too old and worn out to paint. Out of gratitude for what his friend did, Durer made a woodcut of his friend's praying hands.

When Jesus came, he changed art in the world. More poems, songs, stories, books, and paintings are painted about Jesus than anyone else in human history.

Art

Cathedrals — After Constantine, around 350 A.D., art began to flourish, specifically Christian art. One of the first things we see is Cathedrals. Great cathedrals were built. Here is one of the first cathedrals. It is in modern-day Armenia. Cathedrals are immense, elaborate buildings designed to help people



worship Jesus. It didn't take long for them to become quite elaborate. They had high ceilings of stone. Here is one early cathedral in Germany. They took years and years to build. Remember that people didn't have power tools. Why were cathedrals like this built? They were intended to help people grow in their awe of God and gratitude to Jesus. Cathedrals are some of the most amazing buildings ever created. If Jesus was not born, this kind of architecture would not exist.

Michelangelo — He lived from 1475-1519. He was a



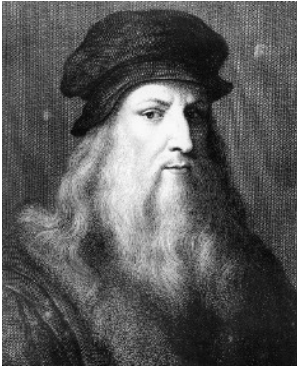
devout Christian. He sculpted the statues of David, Moses, and Jesus.



His masterpiece is his work on the ceiling and walls of the Sistine Chapel. Since many people couldn't read, wanted to use his artistic gift to teach people about Jesus and their Bible. If people could

not read the Bible, they could see the Bible. Had Jesus never come, Michelangelo wouldn't have had Jesus, his favorite subject, that inspired him to paint and sculpt.

Leonardo da Vinci — He lived from 1452-1519. He was one of the most



versatile humans ever to live. He also was a Christian.

His greatest works of art were about

biblical themes, such as the Last Supper,

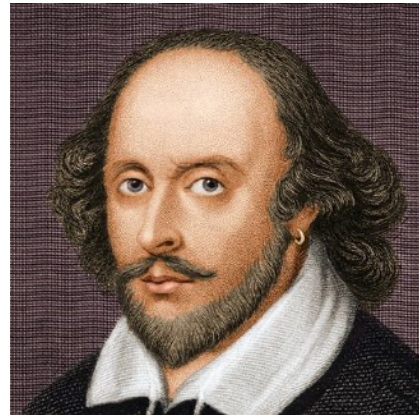
the Baptism of Jesus,



the worship of the wise men, and Mary with baby Jesus.

Literature

William Shakespeare — He lived from 1564-1616 and is known as one of the world's greatest writers. Shakespeare knew his Bible, and he knew it well. His writings are filled with biblical allusions. Read this line from his last will and testament.



“I commend my soul into the hands of God my creator, hoping and assuredly believing through the only merits of Jesus Christ my Savior, to be made partaker of life everlasting; and my body to the earth, whereof it is made.”

Shakespeare would have been different if Jesus had never been born.

John Bunyan — He lived from 1628-1688. He wrote a book that sold more copies than any other in history. In sales, it is second only to the Bible. It is called Pilgrim's Progress. It is the story of Pilgrim and his journey to the Celestial

city, which is his heavenly home. Along the way, many things try to distract him from the finish line. It is a story about the Christian life. The only book that has sold more copies is the Bible. If Jesus had never been born, John Bunyan wouldn't have had a Christian life to write about.

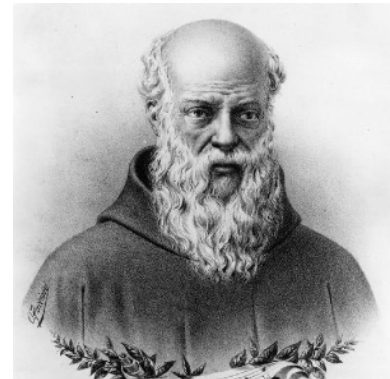


Charles Dickens — He lived from 1812-1870. He wrote the book A Christmas Carol. It is about the transformation of a miserly Scrooge at Christmas. In its original form, before it was rewritten for modern culture, it was the story of a Christian conversion, the conversion of Scrooge at Christmas. Most people don't know that. Charles Dickens was a devout Christian. His last published book was The Life Of Our Lord. He wrote it to teach his children about Jesus.



Music

Guido of Arezzo — He lived from 995 -1050. He was a monk. He is the father of musical notation. He was the first to compose music by writing notes on paper. If you know how to read music, this guy started writing music. He was a Christian. He created written music so people could learn their parts to play in church. He also created parts for musical harmony:



soprano, alto, bass, and tenor. Had Jesus never come and a Christian monk never set out to find a way to write music for people to be able to play in church, we might not have sheet music.

Johan Sebastian Bach — Bach is considered by many to be the greatest musician ever to live. He developed classical music as we know it today. He was a devout Christian. He was Lutheran. Over his musical manuscripts, you often find sets of letters in Latin. One frequently written in the margins of his original music is S.D.G., Latin for Soli Deo Gloria, which means only for the glory of God. In other manuscripts, in the margin, he wrote J. J., Latin for Jesu Juban, which means Jesus help me.



He told his students they would never be great musicians unless they were Christians. He believed the best music was written as an act of worship to Jesus.

Bach was also the first man to play the keyboard with 5 fingers. Before Bach, the keyboard was only played with three fingers.

Had Jesus never been born, there is no reason to believe the greatest paintings ever to be painted by Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, and many others would have been painted. Jesus was the subject of so many of them. Had Jesus never been born, some of the greatest literature ever written would not exist because Jesus was the primary influence behind Shakespeare, Bunyan,

Dickens, and many others. Had Jesus never been born, we might not have sheet music and some of the greatest music ever written by Bach, Handel, and many others.

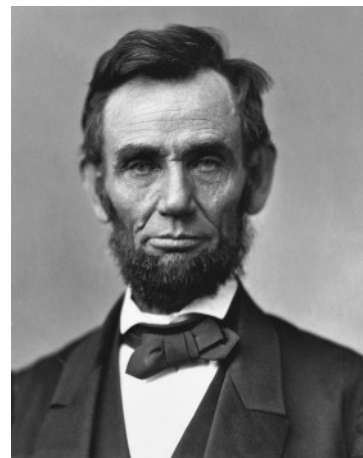
The birth of Jesus changed politics.

As soon as I say politics, many of us get nervous. Today, we hear about the separation of church and state. Many do not understand that phrase the way it was intended. The founders of our country did not intend for the people to be functional atheists in public but followers of Jesus in private. Separating church and state means the state should not and cannot establish a state-run church. One's faith in Christ, can and should influence our choices in life, that includes our political choices.

Let me give you the story of two men whose faith in Christ dramatically changed the political world.

Abraham Lincoln

Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865) was greatly influenced by Jesus and the Bible. Let me tell you his story. Early in his life, Lincoln was not a Christian. He fell in with agnostic friends who gave him the book Volley's Ruins. It was a book that viciously undermined the Bible. That book had a chilling effect on Lincoln's faith in Christ. During the middle of the civil war, he returned to his Bible and gave his life to Jesus.



Joshua Speed was one of Lincoln's closest friends. In one of Lincoln's biographies, we read about Joshua Speed's encounter with Abraham Lincoln in the summer of 1864.

As I entered the room, near night, he was sitting near a window, intently reading the Bible. Approaching him I said: "I am glad to see you so profitably engaged." "Yes," said he, "I am profitably engaged." "Well," said I, "if you have recovered from your skepticism, I am sorry to say that I have not." Looking me earnestly in the face, and placing his hand upon my shoulder, he said: "You are wrong, Speed; take all of this book upon reason that you can and the balance on faith, and you will live and die a happier and better man." - Lincoln the Citizen, pg. 201-202.

Lincoln had a growing love and trust in the Bible. The longer Lincoln lived, the more the Bible made it into his life and speeches. Like presidents before him, Lincoln declared national days of fasting and prayer. Look at the order he gave for the observance of the Sabbath by the army.

Order for Sabbath Observance, November 15, 1862. The President, commander-in-chief of the army and navy, desires and enjoins the orderly observance of the Sabbath by the officers and men in the military and naval service. The importance for man and beast of the prescribed weekly rest, the sacred rights of Christian soldiers and sailors, a becoming deference to the best sentiment of a Christian people, and a due regard for the Divine will, demand that Sunday labor in the army and navy be reduced to the measure of strict necessity. . . . The first general order issued by the Father of his Country [Washington] after the Declaration of Independence indicates the spirit in which our institutions were founded and should ever be defended. "The general hopes and trusts that every officer and man will endeavor to live and act as becomes a Christian soldier, defending the dearest rights and liberties of his country. — Miller, ed., Life and Works of Abraham Lincoln, 6:204-205.

Lincoln lived only a year and a half after he gave his life fully to Christ but the last 16 months of his life were fascinating. The last bill he signed into law was that the words "In God We Trust" be put on our money. In his final meeting with his cabinet before he died, he declared there would be no recrimination or vengeance taken on the South at the end of the Civil War. In his last speech, he

ended with the words that a national day of thanksgiving was in preparation and would soon be sent to Congress to be ratified. In his final cabinet meeting, as the Civil War came to an end, he told his cabinet that his next item of business would be to address the plague of alcoholism in America.

That night, he and his wife, Mary, went to the Ford Theatre. He was not interested in the play. That day, the news came that the Civil War was over. He spoke to his wife about what he would like to do in the future, "Do you know what I would like to do? I would like to go with you to the Near East." That night, a young man named John Wilkes Booth, who had too much to drink, left a local tavern. The man guarding Lincoln in the theatre left his post to go across the street for a drink. A drunk John Wilkes Booth made his way into the Ford Theatre. In the noise of the theatre, he quietly opened the theatre box door. Lincoln continued to speak to his wife, "We could go to Bethlehem, where Jesus was born." Booth moved one step closer. "We could visit Bethany and walk in His footsteps." Booth lifted the gun and pointed it at the back of Lincoln's head. "We could go to Jer..." The shot was fired. The bullet pierced his skull and took his life.

Many don't know that Lincoln wrote to the Tenth Avenue Presbyterian Church weeks before explaining that he had come to faith in Jesus. He requested to make a public proclamation of his faith in Jesus at the church on Easter morning. Lincoln died on Good Friday, two days before. Had Jesus never been born, Abraham Lincoln's battle for the freedom of the slaves in our country

might not have happened. Lincoln's strong and godly leadership at a crucial moment of our nation's history came from his love of Jesus.

William Wilberforce

William Wilberforce (1759-1833) was one of the greatest Christian politicians to live. As Americans, most of us don't know his story. Wilberforce inherited great wealth from his grandfather and uncle. He lived among the nobility of England with polished character and etiquette.



He grew up in the Church of England. His mother was not too religious. She feared her son might take the church too seriously, so she kept him away from friends and families interested in the Bible. She wanted her son to continue in the in-name-only Christian faith common in her day.

Wilberforce went to Cambridge. After graduating, he ran for Parliament at the age of 21. Though he ran against older men, his talent for speaking and strong intellect allowed him to win the election. At 21, he entered the House of Commons and served for the next 45 years.

When he was 25, his mother decided to take a summer trip to Switzerland and Italy. He invited an old school friend from Cambridge named Isaac Milner. Isaac suggested that to pass the time on the lengthy travel, they read a book together. The book Isaac suggested was The Rise And Progress Of Religion. It was a book about Jesus and what he did for us on the cross. God began working

in Wilberforce's life with this book. He resisted it. He didn't want Jesus changing his life, the parties he attended, or the wealth and power held.

The next summer, Wilberforce's mother wanted to take another family trip. Wilberforce invited his old school friend Isaac Milner to join them like the previous year. Isaac suggested another book to read on the trip. It was the Greek New Testament. As Wilberforce read the New Testament, God took hold of his heart and changed his life. He confessed his sin, trusted in Jesus, and returned to England after the summer a changed man.

His family thought he was out of his mind. He wasn't crazy. He was extremely loving, caring, and joyful. He was soon known as one of England's most loving and compassionate men.

He had a problem. He was 25. He served in Parliament and represented the largest county in England, Yorkshire. Politics is messy. He considered leaving politics because of the corruption in his line of work.

It was at that time that he visited John Newton. He was a former slave trader who met Jesus and was now a pastor. He wrote the hymn Amazing Grace, which so many love. John Newton recommended he not leave Parliament. He felt God put him there for a reason, possibly to get rid of the slave trade in England. At that time, other friends also encouraged him to keep his position in Parliament but to use his great gifts and position of power to lobby for the end of slavery. They knew it would take years, maybe a lifetime, to accomplish.

Wilberforce gave himself to studying slavery and preparing for the task. He divided his day into 15-minute increments to ensure he faithfully prepared for

this monumental task. Along with 40 other members of Parliament, he relinquished his salary so he could never be bribed into silence.

Finally, he was ready. He went before Parliament and spoke for 4 and a half hours about the evils of slavery and why he called for its end. When it came time for the vote, it was defeated. The next year, he tried again, and it was defeated. He took a year off, then tried again, and it was defeated. For 20 years, he consistently spoke of the evils of slavery, lobbied against slavery, and each year spearheaded the vote to eliminate it, but each time it was voted down. Things were changing. Over time, the split in the vote became closer. Each year, the vote inched closer to passing. Finally, in 1807, twenty years after he began the crusade to outlaw the slave trade in England, it passed. When the vote to end slavery passed, the entire Parliament rose and gave William Wilberforce a standing ovation, probably the longest-standing ovation ever given in Parliament's history. Wilberforce sat at the table in front of Parliament the whole time with his head in his hands, sobbing tears of joy.

While the slave trade was outlawed, the slaves already in England were still in slavery. Wilberforce continued his battle to free them for an additional 25 years. It was a vicious fight. He was attacked in the media. He was accused of things he had never done. He was physically assaulted. He and his family had their life threatened. He was the target of an attempted murder. He and his family were forced to hire bodyguards 24 hours a day. He wouldn't give up. Ending slavery is what Jesus would do.

Finally, 59 years after he wrote his first article in the newspaper opposing slavery, he was at the end of his life. He was in London battling the illness from which he would soon die. The bill for the emancipation of slaves in England again was brought before Parliament. It passed!

Immediately, a man was sent to run the one mile from Parliament to Wilberforce's home to tell him the good news. That day, 700,000 slaves in England were set free. A few days later, William Wilberforce closed his eyes for the last time, and he went home to be with Jesus.

If Jesus had never been born, slavery might still be taking place in England today. If Jesus was never born, slavery might also still be part of America.

The good news is Jesus was born. Jesus lived. He died. He rose again. For everyone who trusts in him, he forgives their sin and gives them a new heart and life—a civilized heart instead of a barbaric one.

I love this quote.

All the armies that ever marched, all the navies that ever sailed, all the parliaments that ever sat, all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man on this earth as much as that one solitary life. — James Francis

Applications

1. Jesus changed history... and he changed it for the better!
 - A. The birth of Jesus civilized nations wherever the gospel message went.
If it were not for the birth of Jesus, we might still be drinking from human skulls.

- B. Jesus was the driving force behind the greatest art, literature, and music the world has seen.
 - C. Jesus was behind some of the greatest political work in history, such as the ending of slavery.
2. If Jesus changed history, he can change your story... He came to do a work far greater than improving society. He came to forgive our sins and restore our relationship with God.
- 3.



Dr. Kurt Trucksess is ordained in the Evangelical Free Church of America. He enjoys reading, writing, and time with his family. Feel free to contact him at www.Christ2RCulture.com (www.c2rc.com)

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