



LEGACY

How Jesus Changed the World

Bible Studies for Ashfield Presbyterian Church
ashfieldpresbyterian.org.au

INTRODUCTION

Modern Secular Humanism wants to remove every trace of Christianity from Western society, for example teaching the Bible in schools, prayer in public forums, the ability to express a Christian viewpoint in public life, and a Christian view of marriage and gender. Christianity is blamed for everything from racial prejudices, slavery, oppression of women, and discrimination against homosexuals to opposition to science, destruction of the environment, and religious wars.

In contrast, however, Egyptian-born American scholar of Islam, Raymond Ibrahim, has made the following observation about Christianity:

“Forgotten (or suppressed) is that Western civilization did not develop in a vacuum. All values prized by the modern West—religious freedom, tolerance, humanism, gender equality, monogamy—are inextricably rooted to Judeo-Christian principles which, over the course of some 2,000 years, have had a profound influence on Western epistemology, society and culture... While they are now taken for granted and seen as “universal,” it’s not for nothing that these values were born and nourished in Christian—not Islamic, Buddhist, Hindu, Confucian, or pagan—nations.”¹



Raymond Ibrahim

The author George Orwell, a socialist inclined towards atheism, criticised the naturalistic tendencies of Enlightenment writers such as Voltaire, Rousseau, Shelley, Ibsen, Shaw and Joyce to consider only natural laws and forces at work in the world. He described it as “the amputation of the soul” of the West. In describing the effect of their work, he writes,

“For two hundred years we had sawed and sawed at the branch we were sitting on. And in the end, much more suddenly than anyone had foreseen, our efforts were rewarded, and down we came. But unfortunately... it appears that amputation of the soul isn’t just a simple surgical job, like having your appendix out. The wound has a tendency to go septic.” (*Notes on the Way*, 1940)



George Orwell

How much has changed in our world since Orwell’s time?! Where will Western civilisation end up? We need to recover a sense of what Jesus, the Bible, and a Biblical world-view have contributed to our society before it is too late. This series will examine the foundational roots of many of the values Western society holds as essential for individuals, and a community, to flourish. We will explore how the life and teaching of Jesus changed the world and why it matters.

¹ <https://www.raymondibrahim.com/2016/07/03/made-in-our-image-the-allure-of-moderate-muslims/>

EQUALITY

Few people today disagree with the concept that individuals matter, irrespective of race, ability, age, sex or status. Most are mistaken, however, about its origin. Ancient Greeks, including Plato and Aristotle, viewed slaves and the disabled as barely people – physical property. Hinduism’s fatalism, chained by belief in the caste system and reincarnation, gives no incentive for the sufferer to move upward, or for those with more resources to help them. Islam, too, is fatalistic, with submission to the will of Allah, expressed in not working to relieve suffering, an evidence of faith. Buddhism, with its emphasis on knowledge as the means to transcend this physical, evil world, has no tools to comfort or help the sufferer.

It was the Renaissance humanists, with their emphasis on the dignity of humanity made in the image of God, and the widespread availability of the Bible brought about by the Reformation, that enabled the West to see value in all human life.

The United States Declaration of Independence:
We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

1. Where do you think Australian culture’s love of “a fair go for everyone” comes from?

Do you think our society genuinely reflects that, or is it a simplistic stereotype?



Watch: “Episode 2: Equality” of *Jesus: The Game Changer DVD*

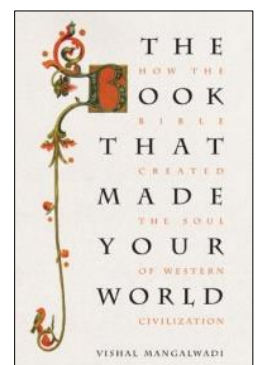
Discuss: Anything interesting you want to discuss?



2. **Read Genesis 1:26-31.** How are humans different from the rest of God’s creation?

What practical implications does this have for how we treat each other, and God’s creation?

“Renaissance writers did not derive their high view of man from only one verse of the Bible that describes the creation of man. They found human dignity affirmed most supremely in the Bible’s teaching on the incarnation of Christ. The New Testament taught that God saw the misery of man and came as a man.” Vishal Mangalwadi, *The Book That Made Your World: How the Bible Created the Soul of Western Civilisation*, 70.



3. **Read John 1:10-14.** How do these verses teach the truth of the quote from CS Lewis; 'The Son of God *became a man* to enable men to *become sons of God*'?

What do these verses say about God's view of the dignity and worth of humanity?

4. What do we learn about Jesus' view about the dignity of individuals from the following passages?

Mt 18:10-14:

Jn 10:1-13:

Seeing the work of Mother Theresa, Malcolm Muggeridge noted that faith in Christ's incarnation had inspired many Christians to give up their comforts and risk their lives to serve the poorest of the poor. Even though he was an atheist at the time, he observed that atheistic humanism had not inspired anyone to devote his or her life to serve the dying destitute in Calcutta.



Mother Theresa

CHANGING THE WORLD AROUND YOU

5. **Read Matthew 25:31-46.** How are we to treat the least of people? Why?
6. Who is someone you disregard as being equal to you? How could you affirm their worth this week?

PRAYER POINTS

FORGIVENESS

“Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us”:

There have been many revolutionary manifestos by world leaders. But perhaps none has been more revolutionary than Jesus’ command to turn the other cheek when you have been struck on one cheek (Mt 5:39). And not just once – seventy times seven (Mt 18:22)! Forgiveness is arguably the most radical principle Jesus ever taught. When natural human instinct is to get even, and revenge intensifies the situation, forgiveness absorbs the hurt, and de-escalates it, allowing reconciliation and healing.

1. Can you think of a time when you have struggled to forgive someone?

Can you think of a time someone has forgiven you? How did it feel?



Watch: “Episode 3: Forgiveness” of *Jesus: The Game Changer DVD*

Discuss: Anything interesting you want to discuss?



2. **Read Matthew 6:12-15.** Jesus commands us to ask for God’s forgiveness, and to forgive those who sin against us. What is the connection between the two?

What does **Colossians 3:13** teach us about the connection between our forgiveness of others and God’s forgiveness of us?

3. **Read Matthew 18:21-35.** Jesus teaches this parable in response to Peter’s question, “How many times must I forgive my brother?” What point is Jesus making?

Jesus expresses the application negatively (v35) – “This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart.” How would you express the application positively?

4. **Read 1 John 1:8-10.** What statement is made about the nature of each person?

What promise does God give here? Are there limits on the promise?

What must we do to receive this gift from God? How can God be just as he forgives sin? (Hint: Keep reading to 1 Jn 2:2)

Corrie Ten Boom was a Dutch Christian arrested and imprisoned in a Nazi concentration camp during WW2 for hiding Jews. She writes about an opportunity she had to forgive one of her captors.



It was 1947 and I had come from Holland to defeated Germany with the message that God forgives. It was the truth they needed most to hear in that bitter, bombed-out land... (I finished my talk, and people began to leave) And that's when I saw him, working his way forward against the others. One moment I saw the overcoat and the brown hat; the next, a blue uniform and a visored cap with its skull and crossbones. It came back with a rush: the huge room with its harsh overhead lights, the pathetic pile of dresses and shoes in the center of the floor, the shame of walking naked past this man... Betsie and I had been arrested for concealing Jews in our home during the Nazi occupation of Holland; this man had been a guard at Ravensbrück concentration camp where we were sent. Now he was in front of me, hand thrust out: "A fine message, fräulein! How good it is to know that, as you say, all our sins are at the bottom of the sea!"

And I, who had spoken so glibly of forgiveness, fumbled in my pocketbook rather than take that hand. He would not remember me, of course—how could he remember one prisoner among those thousands of women? But I remembered him and the leather crop swinging from his belt. It was the first time since my release that I had been face to face with one of my captors and my blood seemed to freeze.

"You mentioned Ravensbrück in your talk," he was saying. "I was a guard in there." No, he did not remember me. "But since that time," he went on, "I have become a Christian. I know that God has forgiven me for the cruel things I did there, but I would like to hear it from your lips as well. Fräulein"—again the hand came out—"will you forgive me?" And I stood there—I whose sins had every day to be forgiven—and could not. Betsie had died in that place—could he erase her slow terrible death simply for the asking? It could not have been many seconds that he stood there, hand held out, but to me it seemed hours as I wrestled with the most difficult thing I had ever had to do. For I had to do it—I knew that. The message that God forgives has a prior condition: that we forgive those who have injured us. "If you do not forgive men their trespasses," Jesus says, "neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses." I knew it not only as a commandment of God, but as a daily experience. Since the end of the war I had had a home in Holland for victims of Nazi brutality. Those who were able to forgive their former enemies were able also to return to the outside world and rebuild their lives, no matter what the physical scars. Those who nursed their bitterness remained invalids. It was as simple and as horrible as that. And still I stood there with the coldness clutching my heart. But forgiveness is not an emotion—I knew that too. Forgiveness is an act of the will, and the will can function regardless of the temperature of the heart. "Jesus, help me!" I prayed silently. "I can lift my hand. I can do that much. You supply the feeling." And so woodenly, mechanically, I thrust my hand into the one stretched out to me. And as I did, an incredible thing took place. The current started in my shoulder, raced down my arm, sprang into our joined hands. And then this healing warmth seemed to flood my whole being, bringing tears to my eyes. "I forgive you, brother!" I cried. "With all my heart!" For a long moment we grasped each other's hands, the former guard and the former prisoner. I had never known God's love so intensely as I did then.

5. To forgive others genuinely, you need to understand what it means to be forgiven. Do you know God's forgiveness?

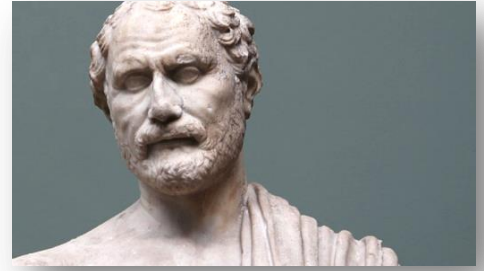
CHANGING THE WORLD AROUND YOU

6. Who is someone you struggle to forgive? What would it look like to be open to forgiving them?

PRAYER POINTS

WOMEN & CHILDREN

Life as a woman in the Greco-Roman world around the time of Jesus was radically different from how our society values women today. The Ancient Greek statesman and orator **Demosthenes** defined the roles and rights of women like this: a mistress for pleasure, concubines for bodily needs, and a wife for raising children and managing his household. (*Apollodorus Against Neaera*, III, 122)



Demosthenes

Roman girls were married at 12 or 13 to men who were over 30. They had no say in the matter. Once married they could be divorced on a whim, with no divorce court to compel a husband to financially support his wife. Adultery for a married man was considered normal. In comparison, Christian women of the time married at 18 or 19. They had a lot of say in who they married and divorce was not permitted. Adultery was sin. Life for Christian women was far better and more secure than for Roman women.

Roman baby girls were regularly abandoned or drowned at birth. Daughters were seen as a drain on a family's resources, rather than an asset. Highly risky abortion was rife – always the husband's decision.

What a different view of women we see from Jesus!



Watch: "Episode 4: Women & Children" of *Jesus: The Game Changer DVD*

Discuss: Anything interesting you want to discuss?



1. **Read Luke 8:1-3.** What do we learn from these verses about the composition of the group who followed Jesus?

Why do you think Luke mentions the specific characteristics of the women he chooses?

2. **Read Luke 7:36-50.** How did Jesus treat this woman? How is this treatment counter-cultural?

3. **Read Luke 10:38-42.** In this story Martha is taking the traditional role for women of preparing food. What is Mary doing by comparison? What is Jesus' attitude to her?

4. **Read Matthew 18:1-6.** What is Jesus' attitude to children?

Rather than being overlooked and expendable, Jesus calls on adults to imitate children. What qualities is Jesus affirming?

The Stoic philosopher Seneca (4 BC-65 AD) comments casually in *On Anger 1.15*: "...mad dogs we knock on the head...unnatural progeny we destroy; we drown even children at birth who are weakly and abnormal." Who does Jesus say, instead, deserves to be drowned?

What are the practical implications of this today?

How has Jesus' treatment of a child in this story helped reframe attitudes to childhood?

7. **Read Ephesians 5:25-32.** In the cultural context of women being treated by husbands as possessions, would these verses have been heard as 'misogynistic', 'normal and usual', or 'radical and revolutionary'?

CHANGING THE WORLD AROUND YOU

8. Who is someone in your life you've disregarded because of their age or sex? What's something you could do this month to affirm their value?

PRAYER POINTS

DEMOCRACY

1. Those of us in the modern West take political stability and democracy for granted. What elements are needed for a just, fair and robust democracy?
2. Is there a political system or position that is more Christian than others?
3. Should Christians be involved in politics?



Watch: “Episode 5: Democracy” of *Jesus: The Game Changer DVD*

Discuss: Anything interesting you want to discuss?



“The truths of the Judaeo-Christian tradition are infinitely precious, not only, as I believe, because they are true, but also because they provide the moral impulse which alone can lead to that peace, in the true meaning of the word, for which we all long... [Democracy requires] the life of faith... as much to the temporal as to the spiritual welfare of the nation.” Margaret Thatcher (as quoted in Mangalwadi, 161-2.)



Margaret Thatcher

4. **Read Luke 4: 14-21.** How did Jesus understand his ministry?

Is the freedom Jesus brings spiritual or physical/political?

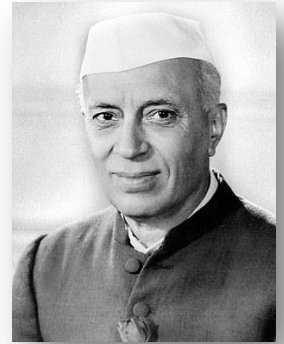
Does the message of the gospel have anything to say those involved in the political process?

5. What do the following verses show about the way Jesus treated people? What implications are there for how we are to treat people?

John 13:1-5, 12-17

Matthew 20:25-28

6. Democracy takes for granted that leaders will serve the people. However, in the history of the world, this is a very strange thing. India's first prime minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, declared, in a speech, "Fellow citizens, I have come to you as your first servant, because that is what prime minister literally means." (quoted by Mangalwadi, p135) How does this reflect Jesus' view of people?



Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

7. **Read Luke 20:20-26.** Towards whom does the Christian have responsibilities?
8. **Read Luke 3:7-18.** What does the fruit of repentance look like?
9. "Democracy reflects the duality of our moral nature. Because people can be virtuous, we can be trusted to vote. Because people can be relied on to fail. We need to be able to vote." Faase, *Jesus: The Game Changer*, 91. What do you think of this quote?

CHANGING THE WORLD AROUND YOU

10. What are the aspects of democracy we can appreciate in Australia?

What is something you can do to assist the functioning of democracy today?

PRAYER POINTS

CARE

"In the Greco-Roman world, your value as a person was tightly tied to how much you could produce and contribute. This made the world a very dark place for those whose productive capacity was limited, such as people with disabilities. In this utilitarian context, children were only valued for how much they would be able to produce when they grew up... a quarter of girl babies would end up being... left to die. The same thing happened to children with disabilities. There was no welfare state. That is a modern invention. If you were poor and you became sick, you were in big trouble. If you were a traveller or a foreigner and you were robbed or ran out of money, there was no help for you.

Along came the early church with a completely different way of valuing people. Jesus taught that life is sacred-everyone's life. People are to take care of each other. We are our brother's keepers. We have a responsibility to look after the old, the young, the disabled and the ill... The last two thousand years are full of examples of how the church has cared for those in need. Care has become so enmeshed in our conception of what is good, that we think that it is the essence of humanity to care for people in need." (Faase, *Jesus the Game Changer: How the Life and Teaching of Jesus Changed the World and Why it Matters*, 109-114)



Detail of the frieze on the altar from Ostia, showing Romulus and Remus, founders of the city of Rome, who, according to Roman mythology, were abandoned as babies to die, and raised by a wolf



1. How does love for the unlovely challenge our society's view of love?



Watch: "Episode 6: Care" of *Jesus: The Game Changer* DVD

Discuss: Anything interesting you want to discuss?



2. **Read Isaiah 58:6-12.** How did God want his people to treat the marginalised?

3. "Jesus acted as a magnifying lens for a set of principles from the Old Testament." (Faase, 110). What do the following verses show about the way Jesus treated people? What implications are there for how we are to treat people?

Mark 1:40-44

Luke 8:40-56

Luke 14:15-24

"Whoever applies himself to medicine should seriously weigh the following considerations: First that he will one day have to render an account to the Supreme Judge of the lives of sick people entrusted to his care. Next, by whatever skill or knowledge he may, by the divine favour become possessed of, should be devoted above all things to the Glory of God and the welfare of the human race. Thirdly, he must remember that it is no mean or ignoble creature that he deals with. We may ascertain the worth of the human race since for its sake God's only begotten Son became man and thereby ennobled the nature that He took upon him."

Thomas Sydenham, (1624-1689), father of English medicine



Thomas Sydenham

4. What motivated Thomas Sydenham to care for people?

5. How are we to treat people? Why?

Lk 6:27-36

Lk 10:25-37

Lk 14:12-14

Mt 25:31-46

James 1:27

CHANGING THE WORLD AROUND YOU

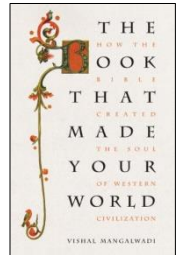
6. When is a situation where you've failed to care for someone you had a responsibility to?

Who's someone you're struggling to care for at the moment?

PRAYER POINTS

LEADERSHIP

“Why do we expect and demand ‘civilised’ nations to send their troops only to liberate the oppressed, but not to exploit them? What changed us? The answer is that we expect America to follow not Alexander, Augustus or Adolf Hitler, but the Bible and its definition of heroism. Its defeated Messiah conquered the classical and medieval ideas of heroism to create the modern world, which values self-sacrifice more highly than world conquest.” Mangalwadi, *The Book That Made Your World*, 120.



For the leaders of Jesus' time, humility was seen as a sign of weakness. Leaders needed to be strong and proud. To do otherwise was to invite revolution.



Watch: “Episode 7: Leadership” of *Jesus: The Game Changer DVD*

Discuss: Anything interesting you want to discuss?



Read Matthew 20:20-28.

1. How does Jesus describe the rulers of the day?

What did that look like?

Does it describe leadership in our day?

How do we see that type of leadership expressed?

2. What does it mean to be great, or first, in God's kingdom?

Is that something we should try to achieve, or not?

3. How do you become great?

4. How does Jesus provide the example?

Read John 13:1-17.

5. Why does Jesus wash his disciples' feet?
6. What is the connection between Jesus knowing that God had given him all power (v3), and his act of washing feet?

“Humility is not about having a low view of yourself or having low self-esteem. Jesus certainly did not have a low view of himself. He knew how powerful He was, but also knew that the best and most beautiful way to express His power was by serving others. You could argue that it takes a

healthy self-esteem to be genuinely humble – to recognise that yes, you do have gifts, but you know that they are not for you, they are for others.” (Faase, 137)

7. How can we be blessed (v17) by performing humble acts of service like washing feet?
8. What are some practical applications of this type of service?
9. Is there any Christian who is above this type of service? Why/why not?
10. Think of a Christian leader you respect. Can you see evidence in their life of humility and service for others?

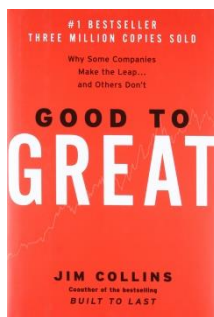
CHANGING THE WORLD AROUND YOU

11. What is a formal or informal leadership role you have?

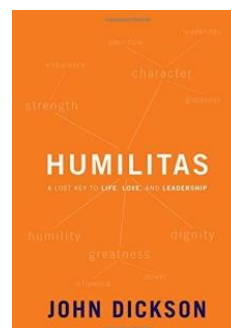
What is one thing you could do to serve those whom you lead?

PRAYER POINTS

FOR FURTHER READING:



Good to Great, Jim Collins



Humilitas, John Dickson

WORK & WEALTH

One of the by-products of the Reformation was valuing normal work. The calling or vocation of a farmer, baker or mason was as high as that of a priest or a monk. Every believer was a saint, and ought to fulfil his or her vocation for the glory of God. This motivation fuelled the so-called “Protestant work ethic”. For example, Richard Baxter (1615-91), the Puritan author and pastor, believed God’s command to work was unconditional, and wrote to the wealthy, “You are no more excused from service of work... than the poorest man. God has commanded [labour] to all.” (*Baxter’s Practical Works*, vol. 1, p115)



Richard Baxter

It was a Christian concern for the most powerless in the labour market that led to the development of many labour-saving devices in the West, such as the water wheel and mill (Middle-age monasteries) and the mechanical reaper (Cyrus McCormick, 1850). Christians such as McCormick were driven by the Biblical idea that through godly and creative work human beings can roll back the ruse of sweat and toil and re-establish their dominion over nature. In contrast Mangalwadi makes the point that, in contrast, his Indian ancestors expressed their genius in a Hindu philosophy that worshipped nature, rather than establishing dominion over it (p320).



Watch: “Episode 9: Wealth” of *Jesus: The Game Changer* DVD

Discuss: Anything interesting you want to discuss?



Work & Creation

1. God is a worker (Gen 2:2), and he declared his creation “very good” (Gen 1:31). How do these two facts affect the Christian’s attitude towards work?
2. From the very beginning, God commands mankind to work (Gen 2:15; 3:19). How does the fall, practically, impact work?

Ethical Choices in Work

3. **Read Luke 3:8-17.** A relationship with God has ethical implications for how you work. What commands does John the Baptist give to workers? How are these the fruit of repentance (3:8)? Which of these commands is most difficult for you to keep?
4. **Read 2 Thessalonians 3:6-12.** Anyone who is not willing to work let him not eat. What is sinful about being idle? In what sense is it godly Christian behaviour to work to support yourself?

Attitudes to Wealth

5. **Read 1 Timothy 6:6-12.** Is money evil? Is it evil to want to earn a lot of money? What advice does Paul give for how the wealthy Christian (and that's almost all of us) can have a godly attitude to wealth?

6. **Read 2 Corinthians 9:6-11.** What principles and attitudes does Paul encourage us in how we use our money?

Jesus talked more about wealth than almost any other subject.

7. **Read Matthew 6:19-24.** Why is it foolish to store up treasures on earth?

What does it mean that "where your treasure is, there your heart will be also"? Where should we be locating our treasure? How do we set our hearts on that?

8. **Read Luke 12:13-21.** What should we learn from this parable about the right attitude to wealth?

Humphrey Monmouth was a wealthy English cloth trader in the 16th century. He wanted to use his wealth to serve Jesus. His treasure was set in heaven, valuing riches there as more important than money or personal safety. He agreed to help William Tyndale produce an English translation of the Bible. Despite an English Bible being declared as heretical and illegal, he funded its translation, personally supported Tyndale even when he had to flee to Wittenberg in Germany. Monmouth was arrested and imprisoned in May, 1528. However, his cloth business faltered without him. In fact, the whole cloth trade suffered, so authorities released him a year later. Monmouth continued to support Tyndale, funding the printing of Bibles, and smuggling them into England, hidden in rolls of cloth. Tyndale is the one who is known, but without the support of Monmouth the production of the English Bible may never have happened.



William Tyndale

CHANGING THE WORLD AROUND YOU

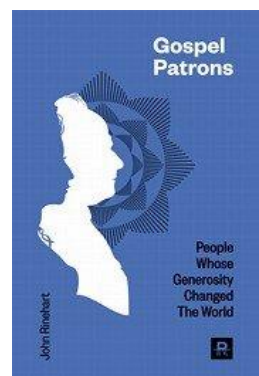
9. What work could you do to accrue more wealth?

Where could you be more generous with your current wealth?

PRAYER POINTS

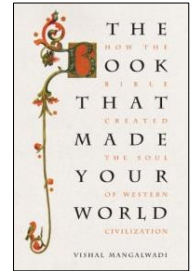
FOR FURTHER READING:

Gospel Patrons, John Rinehart



SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

"The scientific method of studying nature grew out of theology... The pioneers of science believed the material world was *real*, and *understandable* because God created it as *rational*, *ordered* and *regulated by natural laws*... (It was worth their time and energy to study it) because they believed that God created it *good*... The scientific pursuit started with the assumption that people were created as stewards of creation... The Bible taught that God 'gave the sea its boundary so the waters would not overstep his command' (Prov 8:29). This Lawgiver established 'the laws of nature.' These laws can be understood because we were created in God's image to understand and manage nature." Mangalwadi, *The Book That Made Your World*, 221-24.



Watch: "Episode 10: Reason & Science" of *Jesus: The Game Changer DVD*

Discuss: Anything interesting you want to discuss?



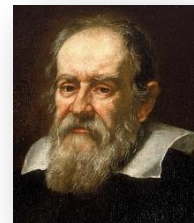
1. Prior to the eighteenth century, a majority of scientists believed in God. Sir Isaac Newton (the discoverer of gravity) wrote more about theology than he did about science! Many church pastors, since the Reformation, were amateur chemists or biologists. They saw no inconsistency between their scientific pursuits and belief in God. **Read Psalm 104.** What does this Psalm teach about the connection between God and the physical world?



Isaac Newton

2. **Read Psalm 19.** In what ways does God's creation declare his glory? What can be understood about God from his creation? (See also Rom 1:20)

Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) wrote "For the Holy Bible and the phenomena of nature proceed alike from the divine word; the former as the dictate of the Holy Ghost and the latter as the observant executrix of God's command." (*Letter to the Grand Duchess Christina of Tuscany*, 1615) Do you think he saw a conflict between being a scientist and believing in God? How do you fit the two types of knowledge together?



Galileo Galilei

3. Jesus didn't expect blind faith. True Christian faith is not faith despite evidence, but faith supported by evidence. How do we see this in the following verses?

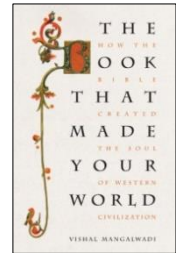
Mark 2:9-12

John 20:24-28

4. **Read Genesis 1:28-30.** God commands Adam and Eve to subdue the earth, (and, in Genesis 2:15, to work and take care of the Garden). What valid Biblical concerns might motivate the Christian engineer, software developer or scientist to develop new technology?

Technology

"Technology developed in the West because, according to the Bible, God commanded human beings to establish their dominion as stewards over the earth... Only one culture has promoted technology for general welfare and for liberating and empowering the weak – (Western culture influenced by Christian) Biblical theology... The Judeo-Christian view produced and nurtured technology in four ways: First, the Bible emphasized intelligent craftsmanship in the world's design, Second, the Bible suggested that human beings participate in divine workmanship by being good artisans themselves. Third, the Bible taught that we follow divine example (ie the Incarnation) when we use the physical universe for righteous ends. And, fourth, the Bible challenged the West to use time wisely, because each moment is a valuable, one-time opportunity." Mangalwadi, *The Book That Made Your World*, 94-97.



"The humanitarian technology that our modern world has inherited from the Middle Ages was not rooted in economic necessity,... (but was) nurtured in the activist or voluntarist tradition of Western theology... The labour-saving power-machines of the later Middle Ages were produced by the implicit theological assumption of the infinite worth of even the most degraded human personality." (Lynn White Jr. *Medieval Religion and Technology: Collected Essays*, 22.)

Lynn White Jr.

Mangalwadi (p101-108) gives examples of these labour saving devices and provides a credible case for them having been developed as a result of the Christian value of humanity: the wheeled plow and the horse, the water mill, windmill and the crank, the wheelbarrow and flywheel, the pipe organ and mechanical clock, and eyeglasses.

5. God commands Adam to care for the Garden (Gen 2:15), and gives the seed-bearing plants and fruit-bearing trees to mankind, and the green plants to the land animals, implying that there is enough food for humans and animals to co-exist (Gen 1:29-30). Aldous Huxley, a pioneer of contemporary environmentalism, blamed the ecological crisis of the modern world on Christianity. He believed that technology developed in the West because according to the Bible, God commanded human beings to establish their dominion as stewards over the earth.

Is there a Biblical Christian position on caring for the environment while at the same time subduing the earth?

CHANGING THE WORLD AROUND YOU

6. What is something you could stop doing to care for the environment? What is something you can start doing to help the environment?

PRAYER POINTS

FOR FURTHER READING:

Mangalwadi, Ch 7 Technology, Ch 13 Science

JESUS CHANGED MY WORLD

Jesus never came to institute sociological ideas that transformed the whole society. He changed the world we live in one person at a time. The world has changed as individual Christians respond to what Jesus has done for them by living as salt and light in the world.



Watch: “Episode 1: Jesus” of *Jesus: The Game Changer DVD*

Discuss: Anything interesting you want to discuss?



1. **Read Mark 1:14-2:12.** Jesus’ primary ministry was preaching for repentance and belief (1:15). However, he also healed many who came to him because he had compassion on them (Mark 1:41). At times these seemed to be at odds with each other. Why does he command the demons (1:34) and healed leper (1:44) to tell no one?

Which is more important to Jesus – relieving physical suffering, or bringing forgiveness of sins? Why?

This series has shown how Jesus has positively influenced Western society. What do you think Jesus would say is the greatest positive change society needs?

What might this mean for how Christian organisations determine the types of good activities they should be involved in?

What might this mean for the sorts of charities you financially support?

For all the changes Jesus has brought to the Western world, the greatest change he brings is to individual lives, when he saves them, making them God’s friends rather than his enemies, bringing them from death to life (John 5:24-30).

2. **Read Acts 26:1-23.** This is Paul’s account of when he met Jesus. What was he like before he met Jesus?

What happened when he met Jesus?

What did Paul do in response?

Read Philippians 3:7-11. How was Paul's world changed by Jesus?

CHANGING THE WORLD AROUND YOU

3. Spend whatever time you have left telling each other about how your world has changed because you've met Jesus.

Share one way that Jesus has been changing you through this series?

PRAYER POINTS