

# Great Minds Speak About Jesus

*"The contemplation of things as they are, without substitution or imposture, without error or confusion, is in itself a nobler thing than a whole harvest of invention."* (Francis Bacon)

(excerpted from *Ready With An Answer*,  
by Dr. John Ankerberg and Dr. John Weldon, Harvest House, 1997)

Today, most people who are unfamiliar with the facts concerning Jesus Christ tend to place Him in the same category as other great religious leaders and prophets. They assume Jesus was no different from the rest. Most people also believe that religion everywhere is largely the same and that it doesn't make a great deal of difference what one believes. A recent poll indicated that even 43 percent of born-again Christians had apparently adopted our culture's relativistic outlook. They agreed with the following statement: "It does not matter what religious faith you follow because all faiths teach similar lessons about life."<sup>1</sup>

Those having such an outlook usually assume that all paths lead to the same God. If there is an afterlife, almost everyone is going to get there regardless of his or her beliefs, as long as he or she was not a terribly evil person. So it really doesn't matter what one believes religiously, and perhaps whether or not one believes at all.

In light of such assumptions, many people wonder if any religious prophet or leader could have significant relevance for today. Aren't these prophets dead and gone? And do their teachings really offer anything unique or special? Can't their instruction be summed up by the fundamental principles of moral living that everyone already knows? Why should anyone be interested in someone like Jesus who lived 2,000 years ago and has no apparent relevance for us today?

## The Influence of Jesus

In response to this, we must consider why non-Christians should become informed about Jesus Christ. First, no one can logically claim to be a truly educated person if he does not understand who Jesus is and the influence He has exerted upon humanity. That means many atheists, agnostics, and skeptics apparently aren't very well-educated. Christ's influence in the world and His claims on people's lives are unparalleled. As Dr. D. James Kennedy pointed out in *What If Jesus Had Never Been Born?* "Jesus Christ, the greatest man who ever lived, has changed virtually every aspect of human life—and most people don't know it....Nineteen centuries have come and gone, and today He is the central figure of the human race. 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."<sup>2</sup> (Indeed, on April 8, 1996, something unique happened in the history of secular publishing. All the three major news magazines—*Time*, *Newsweek*, and *U.S. News & World Report*—carried cover stories on the same person: Jesus Christ.)

He is undoubtedly the single most commanding person in the entire history of mankind. It is not too much to say that if Jesus Christ had never been born, you and I and this entire country, and our entire Western Civilization, would not exist as it does. The influence of Christ and Christianity in helping the poor, in the founding of America, in expansion of civil liberties, in education and science, health and medicine, economics, the family and

morality, the arts, music, and other areas is far greater than the average person ever suspects.

Even the death of Jesus was unique. “His death, beyond any question of dispute, was the most famous death in human history. No other death has aroused a fraction of such intense feeling over so many hundred years. Few can be passive about Jesus. No other human being has been so loved and so hated, so adored and so despised, so proclaimed and so opposed. Yet if the records of Jesus are true, then unquestionably there is no greater truth to be found anywhere in the universe.”<sup>3</sup>

Can anyone deny that because of Jesus, Christianity has become the largest religion in the world? That it has a membership of almost two billion? That geographically it is the most widely diffused of all religions? That it has positively altered individuals, countries, and cultures?

The second reason to be informed about Christ is of paramount importance to each individual personally. As we will see, Jesus Christ makes stupendous claims upon each person’s life. These claims compel us to conclude that your relationship to Christ, or lack of it, will dramatically affect your present and future existence. His life is far more vital to your life, as well as the lives of your friends and family, than you may realize. Jesus Christ is that important, and the evidence backs it up.

[In future articles we will] illustrate some small portion of the impact Christ has had by citing the comments of many famous and noted people—kings, scientists, poets, theologians, lawyers, members of other religions, and philosophers alike.

## Footnotes

1. Cited by Douglas Groothuis, “When the Salt Loses Its Savor,” *Christian Research Journal*, Winter 1995, p. 50.
2. D. James Kennedy, *What If Jesus Had Never Been Born?* (Nelson, 1994), pp. 1, 8.
3. David Watson, *Jesus Then and Now* (Belleville, MI: Lion, 1986), p. 5.