

nations that are still predominantly idolatrous, the tempering effect of Christian principles has influenced the laws concerning the rights and protections of their citizens. It is no longer legal for a widow in India to be burned on her husband's funeral pyre, even though the country is still 85% Hindu. Fathers cannot kill their children at will. Slavery is a crime. God's Word, wherever it has gone, has had a leavening influence and life has been protected and bettered as a result.

But What Is Happening . . . ?

Increasingly, though, in the past century, atheism, humanism, and other forms of rejection of God have grown in their influence. The practice of abortion was one of the early victories. It became "lawful" to abort unwanted babies, so that more than one-and-a-half billion such murders have been committed throughout the world in the past forty years. Homo-sexuality and lesbianism are now lauded as life-styles on par with the marriage of man and woman. "Live in" situations are no longer shameful; adultery, fornication and divorce are accepted. Group sex, pedophilia, and even bestiality are practiced, with the attitude of "It's no affair of mine what goes on behind closed doors".

Do we realize what is happening? As the guiding principles of Christ are eroded in what

we have known as a "civilized" world, we are seeing humanity turn back to the atrocities of the past. Is that the kind of world we want to live in? Is that the kind of world we want to shape for our children?

We don't have to go down this road in order to know what the end will be like. We can see the drastic changes that have already taken place as, one by one, the biblical standards are being abandoned. And we can look further back down the road of civilization to what the world was like before Christ came on the scene. Without doubt, that is the world we will be re-creating if we allow this trend to continue.

*"In Him was life, and the life was the **light** of men . . ."* (John 1:4). Do we really want to go back to a world of darkness, without Christ? Humanity needs to be forewarned: **He came once to bring life and truth. When He comes again,**

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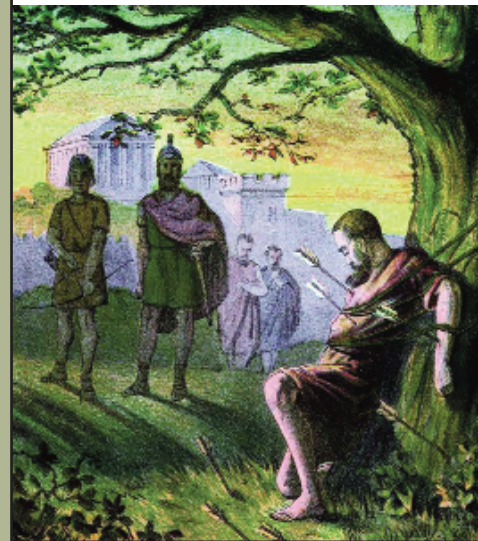
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A World Without Christ?

J.C. Choate



A World without Christ

Betty Burton Choate

He was born two thousand years ago in a small village in the occupied country of Israel. His parents were poor, with no political clout to help make the way for their son. He attended no university. His followers were ordinary people. After only three years of teaching His particular message to the crowds that followed Him, He was arrested, tried, convicted of claiming to be the Son of God — and He was crucified.

Three days later He appeared alive to His disciples, and thus began the historical and spiritual impact of Jesus Christ on the entire world.

The Pagan World

Though the “Law of Moses” that had been given by God to the descendants of Abraham was the prevailing law of Israel, humanity as a whole was dominated at that time by the practices of paganism¹. Into what kind of world was Christ born?

Religion

As has always been true, that world was dominated by religion — false religions, at that time. Greek, Roman, Hindu, Mayan, Inca, and other pagan religions were based on idolatry, with all the accompanying superstitious beliefs. Human sacri-

fice, religious prostitution, and torture of victims to be offered to the gods were common practices. Mothers in India threw their babies into the “holy” rivers in honor of the gods. Mayan priests tore out the hearts of living humans in their sacrifices.

Marriage

Daughters could be sold in marriage by their fathers. A man held life and death power over his wife. He could divorce her at will, but she could not divorce him. Women in most cultures could not inherit property, could not speak in public, and had no rights beyond what was allowed by their father or their husband.

Children

Abortion was freely practiced in Greece, Rome, India, China, and in the western hemisphere, as was the killing of unwanted children: girls, weak babies, deformed or retarded infants. Fathers (or parents) could choose to “expose” babies so that they died from the elements, wild animals, or starvation. A study of records of six-hundred families during one period in Roman history showed that only one percent reared more than one daughter. One soldier, away in war at the time his child was to be born, wrote to his wife that if the baby was a boy she was to keep him; if it was a girl, she was to kill her. Throughout the life of children, in many cul-

tures the father had the power of death.

Sanctity of Life

A large percent of the population was made up of slaves or of conquered people. Those in power could kill at will. Rulers often murdered family members or political figures if they suspected them of disloyalty. Thousands of men fought and died as gladiators, at the whim of enthusiastic crowds.

Sexual Immorality

Fornication and adultery were not forbidden to men, while in a woman the punishment could be death. Homosexuality, lesbianism, group sex, pedophilia, and bestiality were acceptable practices. Many of these perversions were graphically portrayed on artifacts used in the home.

Rule of Law

“Law” was whatever was decreed by the controlling power. There were no recognized “human rights” that must be honored.

The Influence of Christ

Slowly at first, but with ever-widening effect, the teachings of that crucified man in the first century began to impact civilization. Moral standards, a strong conviction of “right” and “wrong”, and the truths of God’s law as revealed in the Scriptures, have re-shaped the laws in countries dominated by Christian beliefs. Even in

¹How Christianity Changed the World by Alvin J. Schmidt