

Why Jesus?



Jesus has been held in high regard by Christians and non-Christians alike. Regardless of whether he existed in history, or whether he was divine, many have asserted that the New Testament Christ character was the highest example of moral living. Many believe that his teachings, if truly understood and followed, would make this a better world.

Is this true? Does Jesus merit the widespread adoration he has received? Let's look at what he said and did...

Did Jesus Promote Peace and Compassion?

The birth of Jesus was heralded with "Peace on Earth," yet Jesus said, "**Think not that I am come to send peace: I came not to send peace but a sword.**" (Matthew 10:34) "**He that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one.**" (Luke 22:36) "**But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.**" (Luke 19:27)

The burning of unbelievers during the Inquisition was based on the words of Jesus: "**If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.**" (John 15:6)

Jesus looked at his critics "with anger" (Mark 3:5), and attacked merchants with a whip (John 2:15). He showed his respect for life by drowning innocent animals (Matthew 8:32). He refused to heal a sick child until he was pressured by the mother (Matthew 15:22-28).

The most revealing aspect of his character was his promotion of eternal torment. "The Son of man [Jesus himself] shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." (Matthew 13:41-42) "**And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into**

life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched." (Mark 9:43)

Is this nice? Is it exemplary to make your point with threats of violence? Is hell a kind, peaceful idea?

Did Jesus Promote "Family Values"?

"**If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.**" (Luke 14:26)

"**I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household.**" (Matthew 10:35-36)

When one of his disciples requested time off for his father's funeral, Jesus rebuked him: "**Let the dead bury their dead.**" (Matthew 8:22)

Jesus never used the word "family." He never married or fathered children. To his own mother, he said, "**Woman, what have I to do with thee?**" (John 2:4)

What were His views on Equality and Social Justice?

Jesus encouraged the beating of slaves: “**And that servant [slave], which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.**” (Luke 12:47) He never denounced servitude, incorporating the master-slave relationship into many of his parables.

He did nothing to alleviate poverty. Rather than sell some expensive ointment to help the poor, Jesus wasted it on himself, saying, “**Ye have the poor with you always.**” (Mark 14:3-7)

No women were chosen as disciples or invited to the Last Supper.

Was Jesus Reliable?

Jesus told his disciples that they would not die before his second coming: “**There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom**” (Matthew 16:28). “**Behold, I come quickly.**” (Revelation 3:11) It's been 2,000 years, and believers are still waiting for his “quick” return.

He mistakenly claimed that the mustard seed is “**the least of all seeds**” (Matt. 13:32), and that salt could “**lose its savour**” (Matthew 5:13).

Jesus said that whoever calls somebody a “fool” shall be in danger of hell fire (Matthew 5:22), yet he called people “**fools**” himself (Matthew 23:17).

Regarding his own truthfulness, Jesus gave two conflicting opinions: “**If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true**” (John 5:31), and “**Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true**” (John 8:14).

Was Jesus a Good Example?

He irrationally cursed a fig tree for being fruitless out of season (Matthew 21:18-19, and Mark 11:13-14). He broke the law by stealing corn on the Sabbath (Mark 2:23), and he encouraged his disciples to take a horse without asking permission (Matthew 21).

The “humble” Jesus said that he was “**greater than the temple**” (Matthew 12:6), “**greater than Jonah**” (Matthew 12:41), and “**greater than Solomon**” (Matthew 12:42). He appeared to suffer from a dictator's “paranoia” when he said, “**He that is not with me is against me**” (Matthew 12:30).

Why Jesus?

Why is Jesus so special? It would be more reasonable and productive to emulate real, flesh-and-blood human beings who have

contributed to humanity – mothers who have given birth, scientists who have alleviated suffering, social reformers who have fought injustice – than to worship a character of such dubious qualities as Jesus.

Why this brochure?

Many Christians feel they have a religious obligation to proselytise, to try to convince others that they should come to think their way about the Bible and how it should be interpreted.

With the greatest respect, I feel the Bible, as any text, should be considered under the light of reason and subjected to scrutiny and critical analysis.

When I do this, I can not conclude it is “the inerrant/literal word of God”. Neither do I find it to be the “Good News” offering me and other readers salvation and eternal life. Reason will not allow it.

I hope this brochure, given in exchange for one of yours, provokes the faculty of reason in you and that you benefit from its use.

*Your Friendly
Neighbourhood Atheist*