

More #4 | Jesus is More

Tyler Velin | December 22nd, 2013

Has there ever been a historical figure more well known than Jesus?

I mean especially during this time of year. It is Christmas. It is the Christian Holiday where we stop and celebrate the birth of Christ.

You hear phrases like: Jesus is the reason for the season. Nativity scenes pop up on our mantles and in our lawns.

Christmas music cannot escape the pull of Christ. Joy to the world, O Holy Night, We Three Kings, Do You Hear What I Hear, O Come All Ye Faithful, Hark the Herald Angels Sing, Angels We Have Heard On High, Silent Night.

Theology floods our airwaves during Christmas time.

The History Channel will undoubtedly show some Jesus-based documentaries.

Especially during this season, people are confronted with the name, the idea and the person of Jesus.

And yet, has there ever been a historical figure more unknown than Jesus?

I mean think about it.

The four gospels include one and a half pages of text dedicated to the first 6 years of Jesus' life. In my Bible the totality of the four gospels, which contain the whole of Jesus' 30 some years of life add up to exactly 100 pages.

The Washington Redskins have two Quarterbacks under the age of 26 on their roster and between those two, there are 3 complete biographies covering over 770 pages. One of those quarterbacks just got benched, and he is out pressing the savior of the world!

People may know of Jesus, but I know of lots of people as well. To know of someone is not to know someone.

There is the tension with Christ. He is known, but unknown. He is worshipped and he is ignored. He is believed in, he is rejected.

This tension is a Biblical tension. Look at **1 John 3:1**.

People knew Jesus. We are going to look at those stories in just a little bit. But on the other hand people didn't know Jesus.

This is the last Sunday in our more series. We invite you to come and join us Tuesday night for the final installment but what I want to do on this last Sunday is dig into Jesus. Because starting at Jesus' birth, Jesus began to overwhelm those he came in contact with. I want to bask in the fact that Jesus is more, that he is an overwhelming savior, and what it means for us to be overwhelmed by him. I want to look at three scenes in the story of Jesus and look how people responded to Jesus.

Pray

Turn with me to the 2nd chapter of Luke. Out of all of the Gospel writers Luke would be the sentimental one. He gives us the most information on the birth of Jesus and the life of young Jesus and he does so by highlighting the responses of those who encounter him. In Luke's gospel there is a personal response to the person and work of Christ.

This is scene number one, the Pre-Birth Jesus.

Last week when John was preaching we saw Mary's "Magnificat." Mary's song of gratitude when she realized that in her womb grew the Messiah, the Son of God. Mary was overwhelmed, her cousin Elizabeth was overwhelmed at the news. John the Baptist leapt in utero out of anxious excitement for Jesus.

The world and the internet were ablaze this summer with news and event surrounding the birth of the Royal Baby in England. But I guarantee you that no baby leapt in womb at the knowledge that Prince William and Kate were going to have a baby.

You see before Jesus was even born, people are overwhelmed at the news of a coming baby named Jesus Christ.

Scene two is the Birth of Jesus.

Imagine it being a warm and crowded night in Jerusalem. Due to the census that was happening the city was bristling with visitors. Probably loud and buzzing. But outside and away from the city were a few shepherds out tending their sheep. Now Luke **2:8** tells us they were keeping watch at night.

Now most of us have probably been in a similar position as the shepherds. Probably none of us have been out in the field guarding sheep, but most of us have had some experience where we were keenly aware of the night's silence. The shepherds were supposed to keep sheep alive. So they were listening for the slightest footstep of a thief, the patter of a pack of wolves. Eyes narrowed, ears deadened by the silence.

And then **2:9**. They were terrified. I imagine it was much different than the iconic paintings we have seen of shepherds peacefully adoring a gleaming angel. I imagine men on the verge of peeing themselves in fear. And I think that is true because look how the angel responded:

2:10-14

Now I love this transition here, because last time we heard from the shepherds they were filled with fear. Not familiar with fear, not fearful, filled with fear. But look at their response: **2:15**. They went. They were so overwhelmed not with the fear of the unknown, but with the prospect

of something more wonderful than they could imagine. Something that caused the heavens to sing.

2:16-20.

Not only did the shepherd's leave their job, leave their sheep, with haste, but they ran away praising and glorifying God. The shepherds were overwhelmed by the Baby Jesus. So eight days pass, and like any good Jewish couple Mary and Joseph take Jesus in to be dedicated at the temple.

And I love this story. I just want read it to you.

2:25-35 (no slide)

Simeon is overwhelmed by Jesus, finally he can die in peace because his eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord. They have seen the Christ. And yet, the plot thickens in this passage. Look at what he says in **2:34-35**. Jesus will be a figure of rising and falling of acceptance and of opposition. Keep that in mind.

But I also want to look at one more response to the Baby Jesus: **2:36-38**.

So here we read of the prophetess Anna. Anna much like Simeon was waiting for the Christ. Ever since her husband died she did nothing but stay in the temple and pray, worship and fast for the coming of the Lord. But I love that little line: **vs 38**.

You see for both Simeon and Anna, the coming of Christ inaugurated a coming of a message. Anna who has spent years in the temple left the temple and began to tell those who were waiting: Christ had come.

Simeon was overwhelmed, Anna was overwhelmed. So overwhelmed that Anna began to make Christ known throughout Jerusalem. People knew Christ.

This was before Jesus even began his ministry. The third scene is Jesus' Ministry.

If we look at the ministry of Jesus, we see that Jesus continued to overwhelm people.

Jesus healed a paralytic in Luke 5 and look how the crowd responded: **5:26**

Mark tells us that the crowds which followed Jesus were so large that people were worried about being crushed because of the mass of people who came to see Jesus.

I love the stories of Jesus feeding the five and four thousand because it is a great illustration of the nature of Christ. Jesus took five loaves and two fish, and made more. So much more that three of the gospel writers went out of their way to say that the people ate, and were satisfied. They could not consume all the food that Jesus had multiplied. Twelve baskets of leftovers were taken from the feeding of the five thousand.

Jesus is known, and Jesus is overwhelming.

One of my favorite passages is after Jesus healed a deaf man in Mark 7. **Mark 7:36**.

You see people were so overwhelmed with the work of Jesus, that they couldn't stop from

speaking about him.

Jesus was known, his works were known, crowds knew him, masses were overwhelmed by him. The baby that caused the shepherds to worship, Mary to sing, and Anna to rejoice was doing more than they ever expected.

So what was the problem? How can John tell us that the reason the world does not know us is that it did not know Jesus? He was the regions greatest celebrity. He wrote the number one bestselling book of all time. Movies depict him, T-shirts express him, Holiday's remember him, Church's gather for him. How is it that Jesus is not known?

Because it's easy to know a miracle worker. It easy to accept a teacher and a leader. Everyone can stop and be overwhelmed by the joy of a baby, fewer people can accept that baby as a savior.

Isn't that the issue here? People had no problem with his miracles. They had no problems with his healings, with his moral teachings. What people had a problem with was the polarizing fact that he was the savior. This was the opposition Simeon referred to. This was the opposition that killed Jesus on the cross. This is the opposition that we now face today.

You see there were people who were overwhelmed with the idea of Jesus, but those people fell away. Those people were in it for the tricks, the affirmation, the popularity, and maybe the thought that it was the thing to do. But there were those who were overwhelmed with the reality of Jesus, and it was those who tasted the fruits of redemption.

The reason we know so little about Jesus' life is because he wasn't born to live. He was born to die. His perfect life has value only because he died the perfect death. The perfect for the imperfect. The sinless for the sinner. And as Paul says, that message is offensive. It is offensive because to realize that you need a savior is to realize that you need saving. Our hearts refuse to accept that fact.

But that's exactly what Jesus died for. Look at **John 12:32-33**.

Jesus is more than our sinful hearts can handle. Our hearts will willingly acknowledge a baby. Our hearts will willingly go to church. Our hearts will tolerate a religious figure, but our hearts will not accept a savior. Jesus changes our hearts. Jesus draws people to himself.

There is a phrase that floats around Christian circles during the Christmas season, and that phrase I think found its origin in the story of Mary and Joseph not being able to find a room in Bethlehem. The phrase goes like this: Is there room in your heart for Jesus?

What a weak and delusional question. Can you be any more degrading to the vast reality of who Christ is? Jesus isn't standing at the door of your heart knocking crossing his fingers that you will let him come inside. He isn't hoping that you can clear a little room in your heart to hold him.

We are talking about the Jesus who is completely overwhelming. The Christ who caused angels to sing, babies to leap, crowds to swoon, dead men to rise, veils to be torn, sin to be forgiven, debts to be paid, God to be satisfied and the earth to shake. You do not have enough

room in your heart for that savior.

Jesus is more than unbelief. Jesus doesn't hope that you figure it out on your own. Jesus came to us in our time of need, was born to a virgin, lived a sinless life, and died a sinner's death so that we may believe.

He doesn't wait for us to make room in our hearts, he gives us a new heart. And he overwhelms us with grace.

Do you believe in that Jesus?

In looking at the gospels we can see that those who were overwhelmed with the reality of Christ were marked by two things: praise and evangelism. You couldn't still their praise, and you couldn't quell their message. That what it means to be truly overwhelmed by Christ.

You see it's easy to fight for the word Christmas. It's easy to set up a nativity scene. It's easy to sing songs and celebrate the birth of Christ. But to treasure Jesus as the Christ, that takes a faith that only Christ himself can give.

When we are overwhelmed with the "more" of Jesus, it's not just Christmas which finds its reason in Christ. All seasons become grounded in Christ. Because when Jesus brings more to our lives, when we realize his authority over our hearts we have a message that will never be mute. A Christ who will never be forgotten. And a grace which will never run dry.

Fear not for behold I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Unto us a savior has been born who is Christ the Lord. Now join with the angels in singing: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased.