

We all love news. What's new for the New Year? Christians have news. The word Gospel simply means news. What is the news that Christians have to tell their friends and the world in general? It is about Jesus who was born in the first century, lived in Palestine and was executed by the Roman occupying power. This is the news of the Christian faith. At the present moment, God is the whole universe, controlling everything that happens in our world and in the future. He is God's appointed for this is what the word Gospel means and that He will be the judge of everyone. In a word, the Gospel says that Jesus is the Lord, the Boss and Governor of everything. Right now!

It is an extraordinary piece of news. Just an extraordinary piece of news. It is the only message for this the early Christians suffered martyrdom. They refused to budge an inch, even to acknowledge the so-called of the Emperor, powerful though the Roman Emperor was. They were reported only to put a pinch of incense on the altar in front of the statue of the Roman Emperor to escape martyrdom of the most cruel sort. Being burned, for example, in the hot lying game, or being torn by lions, but they refused for Jesus and Jesus only is the Lord.

NEW YEAR 1979

D. B. KNOX

'THE CHRISTIAN FAITH'

We all love news. What's news for the New Year? Christians have news. The word Gospel simply means news. What is the news that Christians have to tell their friends and the world in general? It is about Jesus who was born in the village of Bethlehem and lived in Nazareth, a carpenter of the First Century in Palestine and was executed by the Roman occupying power while still a young man. And the Christian news is that this Jesus of Nazareth is, at the present moment, Lord of the whole universe, controlling everything that happens in our world and in the future, that He is God's appointee (for this is what the word Christ means) and that He will be the judge of everyone. In a word, the Christian news is that Jesus is the Lord, the Boss and Governor of everything, right now!

It is an extraordinary piece of news, just as extraordinary now as when it first broke, but it is the central Christian message. For this the early Christians suffered martyrdom. They refused to budge an inch, even to acknowledging the co-deity of the Emperor, powerful though the Roman Emperor was. They were required only to put a pinch of incense on the altar in front of the statue of the Roman Emperor to escape martyrdom of the most cruel sort, being tossed, for example, in red hot frying pans, or being torn by beasts, but they refused, for Jesus and Jesus only is Lord.

This Christian news is a scandal and stumbling block to many people because it means that every other religion must be wrong, that you can't come to God except by Jesus, and this is what the Bible in fact teaches. The heathen bowing

down in front of his idol and the unbelieving scientist working out the theory of evolution are equally ignorant of the true God. Acknowledging the transcendental in life does not bring you into the knowledge of God, for God is only known in Jesus Christ. This is the Christian message. Jesus Himself taught it; He said, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life, no man comes to the Father but by Me".

Of course the Christian message, although startling in novelty, was well sustained by the evidence. First Jesus Himself taught that He had come from God, and was indeed God with us, and the whole tenor of His life and teaching confirmed that He was truthful. And those who associated with Him became convinced of the truth of this, so that they acknowledged Jesus as their Lord and their God, and Jesus received this worship and blessed them for their faith in Him. They worshipped Jesus and directed their prayers to Him.

But of course the evidence that clinched the truth of Jesus as Lord was the resurrection. The disciples had gone to the tomb and seen with their own eyes that it was empty. God is all sovereign and death is nothing to Him and His power had raised Jesus whom they had all seen killed on the cross. Jesus was indeed Lord and this was confirmed when He appeared to them in His risen body and said "all power has been given unto Me in heaven and in earth". His death had been purposeful. Through it He had died to bear our sins by experiencing their consequences. Mankind's sinfulness and wilfulness had been matched by His perfection, obedience and trust in God, And so the Christian message is that Jesus is the Lord and it is

through faith in Jesus that we receive
friendship with God through the forgiveness
of our sins when we acknowledge His Lordship
and make Him Lord and Boss of our own lives.
Jesus is the Lord and in due course will be
seen to be Lord when God's purposes come
to their completion on the judgement day. He
should be the Lord of our own lives and the
centre of our world view now, in order that
He might accept us then.

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