

CHRISTMAS AT THE MOVIES

CHRISTMAS AT THE MOVIES, PART 3: IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE

In the movie *It's A Wonderful Life*, George Bailey has given up on his dreams and is ready to end his life until an angel named Clarence shows up and tries to give hope to George by showing him all the lives that he has touched along the way, and shows George how different his community would be if George had not been born.

What if Jesus had never been born? How different would our world, our culture, and our history be if Jesus had never existed? Let's look at Jesus' impact on human history.

BIG IDEA: Jesus didn't just come to change history. He came to change your history.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How would you like your life to impact others? How would you like Jesus to impact your life?
2. Jesus' impact on human history has been without parallel. His presence is unavoidable. His influence inescapable. His appeal is inexhaustible. His endurance is inextinguishable. H.G. Wells said...

I am an historian. I am not a believer, but I must confess as an historian that this penniless preacher from Nazareth is irrevocably the very center of history.

Go to YouTube and watch John Ortberg talk about the difference Jesus has made in history in session 1 of [Who Is This Man?](#) You can click [HERE](#) to watch the video.

3. Chris asked the question, "How different would the world be if Jesus had never been born?" Go around the group and rapidly throw out how our world history would be different with no Jesus. Try to keep your answers to concrete, non-spiritual answers. (Example: science, art, music, government, medicine, education, social welfare, culture, philosophy, human rights {treatment of women, children, the poor and suffering}, the naming of cities, and more.)
4. Everybody leaves some kind of legacy, but Jesus' impact was greater 100 years after his death than during his life. 500 years later? It was exploding all over the ancient world. 1,000 years later? His legacy eventually laid the foundation for much of Europe and eventually this nation—the United States of America. After 2000 years? Jesus has more followers in more places than ever before. That's impact. What do you think your legacy will be? How do you want your life and your death to change others in a lasting way?

Jesus' vision of life continues to haunt and challenge humanity. His influence has swept over history like the tale of a comet bringing his inspiration to art, science, government, medicine and education. He has taught humans about dignity, compassion, forgiveness and hope. His impact on the world is immense and non-accidental. It's in Jesus' name that desperate people pray, grateful people worship, and angry people swear. From christenings to weddings to sick rooms to funerals—it is in Jesus' name that people are hatched, matched, patched and dispatched. From the Dark Ages to postmodernity, He is the man who simply won't go away. It is in Jesus' name that desperate people pray, grateful people worship, and angry people swear.

—John Ortberg

5. Imagine being a person who visits Earth from another planet. What would they think about Jesus with the massive impact He has had on our civilization and history?

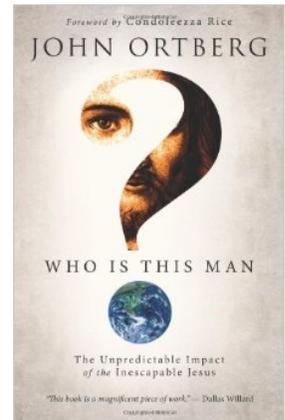
6. With your Bible or YouVersion, [read 1 Corinthians 15:13-14, 17-19.](#)

If that is true, it means that Christ was not raised; and if Christ has not been raised from death, then we have nothing to preach and you have nothing to believe. If Christ has not been raised, then your faith is a delusion and you are still lost in your sins. It would also mean that the believers in Christ who have died are lost. And if our hope in Christ is only for this life? We are more to be pitied than anyone in the world. [1 Corinthians 15:13-14, 17-19 \(NLT\)](#)

7. According to Paul, what benefit is preaching, the church, or any religious activity if there is no Jesus and there is no resurrection?
8. When you consider the ways Jesus has changed the world over time, which sphere of life stands out as one that has especially benefitted you? Share the reasons for your choice. For example, if you or someone in your family were born sick or with an obvious physical impairment, in ancient times you might have been killed or left to die of exposure. Knowing this, you might identify Jesus' influence on medicine or the treatment of children as especially beneficial to you.
9. Of all of the progress and revolutionary changes that can be traced back to Jesus, which do you think have become so woven into the fabric of contemporary life and culture that they are now perhaps taken for granted?
10. What difference has Jesus made in your life? What difference would Jesus like to make, but you're resisting Him and changing? Any attitudes or actions that need to change?
11. How would you like Jesus to impact your life? How would you most like Jesus to shape the person you are becoming?

MOVING FORWARD

Go to YouTube and watch John Ortberg talk about the difference Jesus has made in history in session 1 of [Who Is This Man?](#) You can click [HERE](#) to watch the video. To dig in more into this subject, pick up a copy of [How Christianity Changed the World](#) by Alvin Schmidt or read John Ortberg's book [Who is this Man?](#)



WHAT WILL YOU DO?

If Jesus has changed you're history or made a difference in your story? Share it with someone this Christmas. Invite them to hear how Jesus changed your history. And if you're not a Christian? I challenge you to do some investigating. Ask, "What things have you seen Jesus change? What are some things and some people you have seen changed by God's love?"

CHANGING YOUR MIND

If that is true, it means that Christ was not raised; and if Christ has not been raised from death, then we have nothing to preach and you have nothing to believe. 1 Corinthians 15:13