

The Greatest Event in All of History

by Peter Hammond

Peter Hammond's sermon emphasizes that the birth of Jesus Christ is the greatest event in history, bringing a message of peace and salvation amidst global turmoil.

Duration: 40:29

Scripture: Genesis 1:28, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 28:19-20, Mark 12:31, Luke 2:8-14, Luke 10:30-37, Acts 1:8

Topics: "History"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher begins by reading from Luke chapter 10, verses 8 to 14, which describes the angelic announcement of the birth of Jesus to the shepherds. The preacher emphasizes that this event is one of the greatest in all of history and brings great joy to all people. He then discusses the responsibilities and purpose that God has given to humanity, including loving God and others, caring for creation, and fulfilling the great commission to spread the message of salvation to all nations. The preacher warns against distractions and escapism, urging Christians to face the reality of a world in rebellion to God and to fulfill their responsibilities on earth.

Transcript

The greatest events in all of history. Let's read in the Word of God, Luke chapter 10, starting in verse 8. Luke chapter 10, from verse 8 through to 14. Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over the flocks by night.

And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. Then the angel said to them, Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord.

And this will be a sign to you, you will find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly hosts, praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men. This is the Word of God.

Christmas is the most dangerous time of the year for many Christians throughout the persecuted church. We may have come here today in peace and without fear, but for many, many Christians, for millions of Christians in Egypt, in Syria, northern Nigeria, in Pakistan, this is the most dangerous time of the year. Car bombs, terrorist attacks multiply more than any other time of the year.

There is a hatred for Christians and for Christmas. Why? The angels proclaimed peace on earth, good will towards all men, on whom his favour rests. Now, when we look around, we don't seem to see too much peace.

In fact, we see a lot of violence, a lot of crime, a lot of hatred, a lot of dissension. So what is the message of Christmas mean in a time when it's just so much hatred, prejudice, violence, intolerance, persecution? Now, it's true, Christmas often results in reconciliation between long estranged family members, friends. You can see all sorts of things happen.

Even greatly in history, there was the Christmas truce where the worst war in the history of mankind came to a halt on both the eastern and the western fronts in honour of the birth of Christ. Where the guns fell silent, not just in the western, but the eastern front, and enemies who had been trying to kill one another the day before came out, shook hands, embraced, shared meals, sang Christmas carols together, had joint services, burial services, played soccer the next day. Amazing things happened.

Only Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, could bring peace in a time of war like that. But much of the world, and most of the people of the world, do not know peace with God, let alone peace with their fellow man. Some don't even know peace with their known family.

So what does it mean? What does the Christmas message mean in a time of hatred and hostility and sin and rebellion? Well, notice what the angel said. I bring you good tidings of great joy, because unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. When you ask many people what is the message of Christmas, a lot of people on the street will say, He came to teach us the way to God.

He came to be a good example. He came to bring us the truth. And they think in terms of teaching, so that we might know what we need to do in order to be good enough for heaven.

And these are the kinds of answers you get from a lot of people who might be talking about Christmas. But the message of the angels was, unto you is born a Saviour, which indicates we need salvation, we need forgiveness, we need grace, we need mercy. And so the message of Christmas is not just a general peace on earth to everyone.

Peace on earth, goodwill towards all men, on whom his favour rests. Christmas is a great message for Christians, and it should be a message of hope even to non-Christians if they will hear the word of God and respond to it. But notice, a Saviour is born who is Christ the Lord.

Today many people want God's blessings. They want God to heal them. They want God to make them healthy and wealthy.

They want all kinds of blessings, but they do not want Him to be Lord. They'd rather that He was a constitutional monarch, something like the King of England or Netherlands, who is the representative, the symbol of the country. They will sing God Save the Queen, they will feel great loyalty, they will celebrate her birthday, they will toast the Queen.

There will be all kinds of real sentiments of loyalty and of affection for the Queen even. But she's not allowed to say anything controversial, she's not allowed to get involved in the political life, they mustn't interfere with their own lives. And that is not the God of heaven.

God is sovereign, all-powerful, all-knowing, everywhere present. He is Lord. He is the one who gave us the law.

And I'm one of those kind of people who will only turn to the manufacturer's handbook when all else has failed. I'll try and work it out myself first. And when you really can't get it right, then you turn to the manufacturer's handbook.

Well, the Bible is the Creator's handbook. And when we find things aren't working in our lives, in our families, in our work, in our world, in our community, then we should go back to the Bible. In fact, we should have started with the manufacturer's handbook.

My father-in-law, Bill Baffin, was the kind of person who'd read the manual first, then assemble or even disassemble the engine, put it back together again. And he'd understand it all before he even wanted to drive the car. He wanted to first read the handbook and disassemble the engine and know how all the working parts worked.

Most of us aren't like that. We just prefer to get in there and wing it. And when everything comes to a grinding halt and we've got a real problem, then only will we pay attention to what the manufacturer said.

This is what you've got to do, and this is what you must not do, and this is how it's got to work. Our Creator has given us the instructions how everything should run. So when we don't see peace in us, and we don't see goodwill amongst all men, and when we see strife and violence and every kind of hatred and problem, it should chase us back to the Bible, back to the Creator, back to His instructions, back to the Bible.

The good news is that a Savior has been born. Christ the Lord. You cannot accept Jesus as your personal Savior without submitting to Him as your Lord.

The Lordship of Christ is inherent in the Message of Christmas. When the wise men came to ask, where is He who is born King? The Kingship of Christ, the Lordship of Christ, the Sovereign Rule of Christ. He is the Lordgiver, He is the Eternal Church, and He is the Savior.

All of these are important. Jesus didn't just come to make our lives better and more blessed and to give us what we want, health and wealth and name it and claim it and grab it and grab it. That's not the Gospel.

The Gospel is the Lordship of Christ. He is the Savior because our real problem first and foremost is sin. The middle letter of sin is I. The middle letter of lie is I. The middle letter of pride is I. The middle letter of Lucifer is I. I is at the heart of our problems.

We are our own worst enemies. Sin at its essence is selfishness. I want to do things my way.

I want God to bless me. I want God to heal me. I want God to solve all my problems.

In fact, what we would like is a God who is something like Mary Poppins. She can walk into a room which is in chaos, which has been done over months and years, and just... Agricadabra or what is it? Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious. Click of the fingers and everything is back in its place.

How nice and convenient if we don't have to sort out the mess. The Lord saves us from our sins. He doesn't always save us from the consequences of our bad decisions and our failures and our weaknesses and our bad choices in anything from neglecting exercise, neglecting good healthy food, indulging in things that are bad and destructive, which of course includes everything from alcohol abuse, smoking, all

these things affect our health.

And so for many people to rage against God, the Bible says that there are people who ruin their own lives and then their heart rages against God. And so it's very... I discovered this first during street work in Hillborough. I remember a woman who was full of bitterness to God.

Bitter, bitter, bitter, because her baby had been born deformed. And when talking to her came out, she had been mainlining LSD. Literally injecting into her veins LSD while pregnant.

And now her heart rages against God for the consequence of her own wicked decisions. The evil that people do is obvious and you don't have to go very far for it. Just yesterday at Red Cross Hospital, we came across some tragic stories.

Of course, very few people are hospital over the Christmas season if they can help it. Ten years ago, we rescued Christopher, at least for Christmas Day, from Red Cross Hospital, because he was sort of bound in there for a couple of months with kidney transplant ten years ago. So Christmas ten years ago for us, we went there and we got him out for the day of Christmas.

We saw yesterday people there who... There's some children there whose parents have abandoned them. And they don't know where their parents are. They don't know if their parents are.

The parents dropped them and they don't want anything to do with them and they're abandoned. Ward D burns. There's one little girl who got horribly burned, rescuing her sister from a fire in a shack and her family doesn't want her anymore.

She now looks ugly and her face is horribly burned, her hands are burned. Barely has a mouth that she can see. And nobody gets to... Family is abandoned.

Family doesn't want anymore. There's tragedies like that, but this is the result of human sin. This is the result of human selfishness.

This is the result of human short-sightedness. And we are seeing around the world a war on the womb. We've seen abortion, which is also part of the Christmas story, because right there in Matthew, chapter 2, King Herod orders his soldiers to go into Bethlehem and kill every child from age 2 and younger, seeking to murder the Messiah.

And there are many Herods today seeking to murder those who bear the image of God. A hatred for those who are God's children. War on the womb, the menace of the manger, the menace of the Messiah.

Today, there is a war against Christmas, every single year. There's the Antichrist Lawsuit Union, the ACLU in America, and others like them in Canada, Australia, Britain, and all over the world, who literally engage in lawsuits to get manger scenes closed down. They don't want public manger scenes in cities or municipalities.

So there's an attempt to wage war on Christmas, replacing Christmas with Xmas, putting an X through Christ, effectively. For some people, it's just an abbreviation. But it's disturbing that even many of the shops, which should be very grateful to Christ and to Christians, because, wow, it's the best time of the year for business in many ways, and yet, in many cases, it's been about happy holidays and holiday seasons, and don't even want to use the word Christmas.

And then there's propaganda. Endlessly you get, at this time of year, Jesus could have been born any other time of the year, but it wouldn't have been on 25th of December. There's all these ignorant and hostile, prejudiced views.

Every single tenet of our faith is being attacked. The birth of Christ, the death of Christ, the resurrection of Christ, the deity of Christ, the doctrine of Trinity, the resurrection of Christ. There is a hostility in every single part of the Christian faith that is under a relentless attack in the media, news media, entertainment industry, and even in the so-called education industries, which is nothing more, in many cases, than indoctrination.

Why is there so much war on this? Well, because Jesus Christ is the greatest man who ever lived. His birth is the greatest event in all of history. And this is actually not just a Christian analysis.

Even secular humanist historians have acknowledged the greatest event in the history of man is the birth of Jesus Christ. And, in fact, almost everyone has to acknowledge it, whether they want to or not, every time you write the date. Because Jesus is the man who divided time.

And every time an atheist writes a date or signs a check with his favourite atheist, anti-Christ society to persecute Christians, he's got to write the date, which includes an implicit acknowledgement of the centrality of Christ and the greatness of Christmas and the importance of the birth of Christ, the inclination, God with us, Emmanuel, God coming down to man. There was no other event in the history of the world around which dates could be centred. The entire world effectively has to acknowledge centrality of Christ because this is 2019 what? 2019 what? 2019 years after what? It's AD, the year of our Lord.

And so we date things from more than that, as BC, before Christ, and AD and Odomeney in the year of our Lord. This has got a great deal of pagans. They've tried everything they could to change it.

For example, in the French Revolution, they tried to make 1792 year one of a new calendar. And they tried to get rid of the seven-day work week and turned it into a ten-day work week. And of course it didn't work.

The Russians tried the same thing too during the Bolshevik Revolution. They tried to have a ten-day week instead of a seven-day week. And it didn't work.

The animals couldn't handle it. The people couldn't handle it. And, well, of course it failed because we're still using BC and AD in our dating system.

But there have been numerous attempts to get rid of it. And today, the most recent one, which I see Christians cooperating in, is BCE and CE, before the Common Era and CE Common Era. But even that, which we should boycott, ignore, and continue with BC and AD.

But even then, even if they want to change the name, it's still centered on the centrality of Christ. Because Jesus Christ came into this world and He utterly altered the way we measure time. His birth and His life became the hinge of the ages.

He changed the history of the world, lifting the centuries off their hinges so that the world now calculates time as BC and AD, before Christ and the year of our Lord. Historian Will Durant wrote... Now, Will Durant is no Christian. He's a secular humanist, secular atheist historian.

He wrote, There is no greater drama in human record than the plight of a few Christians scorned or oppressed by a succession of Roman emperors, bearing all trials with a fiery tenacity, multiplying quietly, building order while their enemies generated chaos, fighting the sword with the word, fighting brutality with hope, and at last defeating the strongest state that history has ever known. Caesar and Christ met in the arena and Christ won. That's not even a Christian writing.

That's Will Durant, a secular historian, acknowledging. Many historians have written, including Toynbee, who wrote The Great History of the World, a great Oxford historian. The greatest event in the history of man is the birth of Christ.

And it should explain to us how... You don't get a big result from a small cause. As somebody said, you didn't get the Grand Canyon or the Fish River Canyon or Blood Canyon by somebody walking, dragging a stick behind them. A big result has a big cause.

How is it that Christmas is the biggest holiday of the year? How is it that we date our calendars B.C. and A.D.? How is it that the birth of Christ has inspired the greatest acts of charity, kindness to strangers, mercy that could even bring a world war to a skidding halt to honour his birthday? Jesus Christ is the greatest person who ever lived and there is no doubt that his birth is the greatest event that ever happened. This poem was written over 100 years ago. He was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman.

He grew up in another village where he worked in a carpenter shop until he was 33. Then, for three years, he was an itinerant preacher. He never wrote a book.

He never held an office. He never had a family or a home. He didn't go to college.

He never visited a big city. He did none of the things that usually accompany greatness. He had no credentials but himself.

He was only 33 when a tide of public opinion turned against him. His friends ran away. One of them denied him.

He was turned over to his enemies and went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed to a cross between two thieves. While he was dying, his executioners gambled for his garments, his only possessions, the only property he had left on earth.

When he was dead, he was laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend. Nineteen centuries have come and gone. What more now? Today, he is the central figure of the human race.

All the armies that ever marched, all the navies that ever sailed, all the parliaments that ever sat, all the kings that ever reigned, put together have not affected the life of man on earth as much as that one solitary life. And so we need to remind people of the greatness of Christ. He is the greatest man in history.

And Christmas is the greatest event in all of history. And every time people write the date, they are actually acknowledging this. And we need to remember the greatest holder in the world is because the birth of the greatest man who ever lived.

Everything that we know and everything that we believe in is under attack by society, but it doesn't matter how much they chisel and detonate and implode and seek to destroy the foundations, yet the greatest art

in the world still testifies of Christ. And the greatest architecture in the world, the cathedrals, still point to heaven and are built in honor of Christ. And the greatest musical compositions in the history of mankind, like Handel's Messiah, are still standing as a testimony to Jesus Christ inspired the greatest art, the greatest architecture, the greatest music, the greatest expressions of charity, the very hospitals themselves, even the hospital across the common over here, Red Cross Hospital.

What is its symbol? Not a crescent moon, not a star, not a hammer and sickle, it's a cross, and it's not just any cross, the Red Cross. Why? The greatest humanitarian organization in the history of the world, International Red Cross, was founded by an Evangelical Christian, by, I'm just forgetting his name right now, the great Swiss Evangelist, Evangelical. When I went to the museum of the International Committee for the Red Cross, the first exhibit is his New Testament.

And in this Bible verse all the way along, this is International Red Cross, which today acts like they're completely secular, but there they've got them. The inspiration of the Red Cross, Jesus said, heal the sick, preach the gospel, good Samaritan, go and do likewise, love your neighbor as yourself. And all these teachers of Christ from the Sermon on the Mount, they are there in the ICHR, ICHR, International Committee of the Red Cross.

Openly, this was the inspiration. Now, this is particularly amusing for me, because back on my very first mission to Sudan, back in 1995, I went to the Red Cross Hospital, Locatropia, and I was wanting to distribute Bibles to the patients there. There were 280 Sudanese patients, many of them amputees, from the war.

Bomb victims, landmine victims, and so on. And I wanted to distribute Bibles to them. And this French man, a Swiss Frenchman, who was in charge of the Red Cross at Locatropia at the time, shook his head and said, we cannot allow the Red Cross to be a secular organization.

I sat in the chair looking at him, and I said, could you please explain to me the significance of the Red Cross? And he suddenly started to choke, and he said, no, no, no, no, no. The Red Cross is nothing religious. It's purely an identification symbol.

It's a Swiss flag reversed. I said, now, you know as well as I do that Switzerland has the White Cross on red because of its Christian origins. Switzerland has a Christian heritage.

And you know that the founder of the Red Cross, he reversed the Swiss flag to have the Red Cross on white because of his Christian faith. You know as well as I do, it was the evangelical teachings of Christ that led him to want to go and heal the sick and do unto others as he had wanted to be done unto and to love his neighbors and himself. This is the foundation of the Red Cross.

Why are you ashamed of your Christian roots? And the man hung his head, and he said, oh, it's very difficult, the Muslims, we do this and that, just to work in a place like Sudan, it's an illegal country. He said, do you know, we had a Red Cross plane seeking to evacuate war victims who had been bombed. And here we were trying to put them onto the plane, and the UN, who oversaw the planes, in fact, in many cases, these planes were actually UN planes flying the people in and out.

And the UN official responsible demanded that the victim, who was lying on a stretcher, made of sticks, it wasn't a proper stretcher like we had, but he had had part of his leg blown off, and he had a wooden cross hanging around his neck, and the UN official demanded he take off his cross to enter into the Red Cross

plane to be flown for medical care. His life was in danger. So I said, what happened? He said, they won't take off their cross to save their lives in Sudan.

Do you think they're going to take it off to get on a plane as a UN official told them? No, we left them there on the ground. They had to take that off. And this Frenchman was evidently not a Christian, but he was angry and he was frustrated.

He said, this is the reality we work in. Islam, the UN, we cannot afford to be seen as in any way religious, or we wouldn't even be allowed to do what we're doing today. So I said to him, I know that you are taking care of the people's physical needs, and I'm sure you've got good specialists and doing a good job, but what are you doing to care for their spiritual, emotional, mental, social needs? These people are far from home.

They're separated from their families. Many of them have lost a limb. Do you have a library here? He said, no, it's very hard to get books in their languages.

I said, I have books in their languages. I have the book in their language that they all want. I've got the book that many of them would die for.

And he said, okay, I'll tell you what. I'll allow you to distribute Bibles that block atop your Red Cross Hospital, on condition you don't force them on anyone who doesn't want them. Of course, that's fine.

We went there. This man stood with his jaw wide open. He couldn't believe it.

Men on crutches, one-legged people, people in wheelchairs, poured there in like a marathon race to get to me for these Bibles. Forget about having to force them on anyone. They wanted them.

And this man was so stunned. And he ended up helping me to distribute the Bibles, which was quite a pressure. And this man said, I have no idea people wanted Bibles so much.

He said, you're always welcome. And so next time, when I came back, I asked for them. They said, no, he's been fired.

Poor man might have lost his job because of this. But we've gotten Bibles to children, 80 people in this hospital. This is where it's gone to now, where even groups like the Red Cross, greatest humanitarian organization the world's ever known, started by Christians for Christian purposes.

They're ashamed and embarrassed about their Christian origins. This is what you're dealing with. We're dealing with a situation where the world is in a terminal stage of insanity and of rebellion to God, not wanting to acknowledge the roots that inspired the law and the order and the cathedrals and the law courts and the schools and the hospitals and the clinics and the roads and the bridges.

So much of our civilization has been built by Christians for Christian purposes to honor God and to care for our neighbor and to do to others we want to be done unto. And yet, despite Jesus being the greatest man, the greatest teacher, the greatest humanitarian in the sense of more good has been done because of Christ. As James Kendi's book, *What If Jesus Had Never Been Born*, and as Professor Alvin Smith's book, *How Christianity Changed the World*, documents everything good in this world comes from the life of Christ, the teachings of Christ, the example of Christ, the people of Christ, and direct obedience to the scriptures.

There was no such thing as charity before the coming of Christ. Kindness to strangers, benevolence to strangers, unheard of. Why? Cannibalism was normal in every society.

Even the highly esteemed Romans and Greeks would eat the hearts and liver of their enemies at different times. Human sacrifice was normal. Even Julius Caesar, often we get the Julian calendar, and in fact quite a lot of our calendars is devised by Julius Caesar, including the fact that he's got July, which is a month of the year named in honor of Julius Caesar.

Now, even he practiced human sacrifices to determine the outcome of battles and which way to go and what to do. The Greeks had two-thirds of Athens were slaves. The Roman Empire, one-third were slaves.

Slavery was normal. The abuse of women was normal. They had no rights in ancient societies.

Every single society practiced human sacrifice, slavery, every kind of oppression before the coming of Christ. Jesus Christ changed the world for the better. If you look at the world right now and you see how bad it is, bear in mind how much worse it was before the coming of Christ.

And then if you go just a century back to where Christianity predominated and where the greatest countries in the world were expressly Christian, openly Christian, then we'd appreciate that the moment we're living in a world that's in rebellion to God, that's trying to deny its Christian heritage. Many people today will say that we are living in a post-Christian era. I don't believe that.

We're living in a pre-Christian era. From all the teachings in the Bible, we are still in the early stage of church history. This isn't the end of history.

When I was converted, the common terminology was we're the terminal generation. Talk about 1970s. We're the last generation.

We're the generation that's going to see the rapture. Jesus is coming in 1977. He's coming in 78.

He's coming in 79. He's coming in 1980. He's coming in 81.

The plans are lining up in 1982. You're going to have earthquakes and floods all over the world. The Lord's definitely coming in 1982.

And so it continued. Out in 1988 came out 88 Reasons Why Jesus is Coming in 1988. The same author brought out a book the next year called 89 Reasons Why Jesus is Coming in 1989.

And people were gullible enough to buy it. He bought a luxury yacht and all the proceeds of the book and sailed around the world. And you've got all kinds of foolishness.

And we've seen that in a lifetime. Y2K, 2012. How many times has the world been coming to an end? And what are these things? These things are distractions.

Christians who don't want to face the reality of the world in rebellion to God, in rebellion to God's laws. And there's great commission for us to make disciples of all nations. And so what you have today is many people trying to justify disobedience.

And so many Christians have now gone to an escapism where they're hoping for the rapture, to be raptured away from their responsibilities on earth. God has given us the creation mandate to fill the earth,

to subdue it, to improve the earth, to care for His creation, to improve His creation, to plant and to cultivate the garden that God has established, to care for the animals that He's created, and to fulfill the great commission to make disciples of all nations, to teach obedience to all things the Lord has commanded. These are our responsibilities.

This is our purpose. This is why God put us on earth. Everything should be done well.

To love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, to love our neighbor as ourself, to do to others what we want to be done, and to be kind. And a good man is kind to his animals, and a wicked are cruel to theirs. And everything we do in this world is to be to the glory of God and for the betterment of His creation and the fulfillment of His great commission.

But many don't want that. That smacks of hard work. Sacrifice.

Not thinking of myself first, thinking of others. And so many are preferring to reshape a Christianity which is all about me, and I can get blessed, and I can be saved, and I can be raptured, and I can escape from my responsibilities, and let God just come and supercalifragilisticexpialidocious solve all my problems, the consequence of years of disobedience, laziness, and of failure to obey His word. But that's not what the Lord is willing to do.

That is why the message of the angels is I bring you good tidings of great joy for unto you is born this day a Savior who is Christ the Lord. Now many may want to focus on the child, the child of Mary, who has been born, but they want to ignore the Son of God who has been given. He's the same person.

He's truly man and truly God. 100% man, 100% God. For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government will be upon His shoulders.

Now that's the one time we can put a capital G to government. God's government. He's the one who determines whether when we live and when we die.

He is the one who makes food come out of the earth. He is the one who makes the sun to rise and to set and the rain to fall. God is the government, the true government, the capital G government, as opposed to our civil governments who are like the grass of the field which is here for a season and then it's gone.

Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government will be upon His shoulders. He will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of this government and peace there'll be no end.

And there's so many prophecies in the Bible about every knee will bow, every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. I'm convinced we're living in the pre-Christian era. It looked like at the beginning of the 20th century that the world was being evangelized.

In fact, at the world's first missionary conference in 1910 in Edinburgh, the consensus of the delegates was that we were entering into the millennium. That by 1960, which happens to be the year that I was born, they were predicting in 1910, the first world missions across Edinburgh, that in 50 years, in half a century, 1960, the world will be thoroughly evangelized, thoroughly disciplined, all false religions like Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism extinct. And Christianity will have not only reached the whole world, but disciplined the whole world to the extent that all false religions will be extinct.

They were predicting the coming of the millennium before the end of the 20th century. Now, of course, that got derailed in 1914, World War I. The great Christian nations of the world fought one another in what some have called an auto-genocide. And this is the tragedy of the 20th century.

The 20th century was where Christians came out of the greatest century of missions and got derailed in the worst century of persecution. More Christians have been murdered for their faith in the last hundred years than have died in the previous 1,900 years combined. The 20th century is the worst century in the history of the Church.

That's why I say we're living in the pre-Christian era. This isn't the post-Christian era. Those people who think this is the post-Christian era are thinking that we're in a terminal generation, that history is about to end any moment.

We could be in the foothills of Church history. This could be the early years of Church history. There may be thousands of generations to come, and we have the privilege of laying more solid foundations to go back to the great Christianity which was established by the apostles in the 1st century and which reached some amazing heights in the century of the Reformation and of the Puritans and of the great revivals in the 1700s and the great missionary expansion in the 19th century.

But the 20th century has been a century of tremendous reverse, not just in numbers, but actually in quality. Because the Christianity of most of history has been a Christianity that was vibrant and tenacious and demanding sacrifice and mobilizing Christians to fulfill the Great Commission. And that's why Christians went out building schools and hospitals and planting forests where there were none.

That's why Cape Town, which was deforested, the only place in the Cape in the 1700s where you would find trees was Hout Bay, which is why it's called Hout Bay. And Knysna Forest was the next forest around. All the trees in Newlands Forest were planted by the Christian settlers.

All the trees that you see around, anywhere outside of Hout Bay and Knysna, were planted by the people who came here, the settlers. Christians, as part of Dominion Manor, and today we're living in a generation that wants to deforest, chop down everything, litter, pollute. And sadly, many of those who are doing that are Christians.

And so our problem today is not just telling people about salvation. These are the missing aspects of the Christian message. Many people don't want to teach the Lordship of Christ.

It's too intrusive. They don't want to teach that Jesus Christ is the King of kings and Lord of lords. That sounds a bit legalistic.

They're wanting a non-judgmental, therapeutic, self-help type of gospel where people can make themselves feel better while they're living in rebellion to God, destroying their lives and ruining the lives of the people around them. Or standing by on the other side of the road, or walking by on the other side of the road like the Levites and the scribes. No, the message of Christmas is about the Lordship of Christ, the Kingship of Christ, the importance of us making a difference, changing this world.

Just like the shepherds who went out and proclaimed what they had heard. It's vital that Christians are transformed by the Word of God and mobilized into fulfilling the Great Commission and the Cultural Mandate. This is not all just about me.

This is about God and His Kingdom, and the Kingdom of God, and His plan for the whole world. The whole church must take the whole gospel to the whole world. Let the whole world hear God's Word.

All of His Word. Not a censored version that's going to make people feel happy and pleasant about themselves and justify their lives while they are ruining the lives of the people around them. That is why the Lordship of Christ and the Kingship of Christ is a vital part of Christmas.

It's not just about a child being born. It's about a son being given and the government being upon his shoulder. Let us pray.

Lord God, we want to thank and praise you for this day, for this season, that you're the greatest man who ever lived, that you're the man who divided time. We also want to remember those Christian brothers and sisters of ours for whom this is the most dangerous time of the year. As those who hate you, persecute them openly, we pray for Christians in northern Nigeria, in Pakistan, Iraq, in Egypt.

We ask, Lord, that you would be an ever-present help in trouble, that you would protect, that you would strengthen them, that you'd give them the courage to do what needs to be done, to be faithful for you as they fight the good fight of faith. And Lord, as we remember those who've been abandoned by their families, like some of the children in Red Cross Hospital, we want to pray, Lord God, that you'd raise up Christians to be good neighbors, even to strangers, to reach out and to bring some joy and some life and hope and faith into the lives of those who have been casualties of society, have been used, abused, and thrown away. We thank you, Lord, for those like the Red Cross.

We thank you, Lord, for those who have gone from one side to the other of the world to fulfill the Great Commission, for the missionaries, for the people who are seeking to help people medically, for agriculturalists and others helping people to feed themselves effectively in place of starvation. We thank you, Lord God, for every expression of faith and love because of your great life, your great example, your great teaching. And we pray, Lord God, that you would continue to inspire great music like Handel's Messiah, great architecture like the cathedrals, great art which honors you.

And we thank you, Lord God, for those who are seeking to do this. May you raise up many more, and may you use our upcoming Great Commission course and Biblical Worldview Summit to inspire more people to hold on to the gospel, where we will not censor the gospel, where we will not settle for something that's just some utilitarian, therapeutic, self-help message to make people feel good about themselves. Help us, Lord God, be faithful to your word, be faithful to your work, be faithful and effective and courageous and bold in proclaiming the gospel, the kingdom of God, and fulfilling the Great Commission.

We pray for Jesus, precious and holy name. Amen.

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