



Chico Alliance Church  
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## “Under the Influence”

*More than nineteen hundred years ago there was a Man born contrary to the laws of life. This Man lived in poverty and was reared in obscurity. He did not travel extensively. Only once did He cross the boundary of the country in which He lived; that was during His exile in childhood. He possessed neither wealth nor influence. His relatives were inconspicuous and had neither training nor formal education. In infancy He startled a king; in childhood He puzzled doctors; in manhood He ruled the course of nature, walked upon the billows as if pavement, and hushed the sea to sleep. He healed the multitudes without medicine and made no charge for His service. He never wrote a book, and yet all the libraries of the country could not hold the books that have been written about Him. He never wrote a song, and yet He has furnished the theme for more songs than all the song-writers combined. He never founded a college, but all the schools put together cannot boast of having as many students. He never marshaled an army, nor drafted a soldier, nor fired a gun; and yet no leader ever had more volunteers who have, under His orders, made more rebels stack arms and surrender without a shot fired. He never practiced psychiatry, and yet He has healed more broken hearts than all the doctors far and near. Once each week multitudes wind their way to worshipping assemblies to pay homage and respect to Him. The names of the past proud statesmen of Greece and Rome have come and gone. The names of the past scientists, philosophers, and theologians have come and gone; but the name of this Man abounds more and more. Though time has spread more than 2000 years between the people of this generation and the scene of His crucifixion, yet He still lives. Herod could not destroy Him, and the grave could not hold Him. He is the centerpiece of the human race and the leader of the column of progress. I am far within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, all the navies that ever were built, all the parliaments that ever sat and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man upon this earth as powerfully as has that one solitary life.*

Who was this person that has so influenced life on this planet for the past two centuries and is the focal point of Easter celebrations around the world today? Nothing in this world not under the influence of this one solitary life. It is only fitting that we take time to consider Him. We will channel our thinking along three basic observations.

- † God’s prophets clearly predicted the details of His historical incarnation
- † Credible witnesses strongly verify the reality of His personal claims
- † History amply records the immensity of His personal impact on our world

### **I. God’s prophets clearly predicted the details of His historical incarnation**

#### **A. His Family**

- 1. Seed of the woman Genesis 3:15.**
- 2. Seed of Abraham Gen 12:3 Gen 26:4 Gal 3:16**
- 3. Tribe of Judah Num 24:17 Gen 49:10**
- 4. Descendant of David Isa 11:2 2Sa 7:16**

#### **B. His Birth**

- 1. Virgin Birth -- Isa 7:14 Luk 1:35**
- 2. Chronology at the right time Dan 9:25 Gal 4:5**
- 3. Place of birth Bethlehem Micah 5:2**

### C. His Person

1. Immanuel Isa 7:14 Isa 9:6
2. Pre-Existent Mic 5:2
3. Righteous Isa 53:11
4. Faithful Isa 11:5
5. Meek Zec 9:9

### D. His Work

1. Work Miracles - Isa 11:2
2. Prophet Deu 18:18
3. Priest Psa 110:4
4. King Psa 2:12
5. Lamb of God -- Suffering Servant Isa 53

The specifics concerning His suffering and the events of His death are numerous.

The triumphal entry

The mocking

The betrayal

The piercing

The 30 pieces of silver

The crucifixion

The Potter's field

The garments

The abandonment by His Disciples

The unbroken bones

The false witnesses

The darkness

His silence before His accusers

The borrowed tomb.

His torture and scourging

If one considers only eight of these specific prophecies and applies the laws of probability, the probability of one man fulfilling just eight is one with 17 zeros behind it. For these things to come true in one man has the same chance as a blindfolded man would have picking a marked silver dollar out of a mass of silver dollars two feet deep over the whole state of Texas. The probabilities of fulfilling 48 narrows to one in 10 to the 157 power.

### 6. Lion of Judah -- Reigning King

In Revelation 5, John merges the two images running through the Bible as he describes the lamb on the throne. Many were looking for Messiah to come. After 400 years of silence from God, an angel broke through the celestial battle lines to deliver a long-awaited message to a humble young teenager in Israel. For those who understood, He more than fulfilled their anticipation. He more than answered their longings. He touched them like no other.

*"Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins." Acts 10:43*

This was no ordinary human. This was the light of the world, the eternal word becoming flesh and walking among men as a man. While on earth He uttered some incredible claims, which come with most convincing witnesses and lead to a sobering dilemma.

## II. Credible witnesses strongly verify the reality of His personal claims

### A. The claims

Jesus did not hedge at all concerning who He was.

#### 1. I am the Light of the World

*Again therefore Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life." John 8:12*

#### 2. I Am the Messiah the Christ

*And the high priest stood up and came forward and questioned Jesus, saying, "Do You make no answer? What is it that these men are testifying against You?" But He kept silent, and made no answer. Again the high priest was questioning Him, and saying to Him, "Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?" And*

Jesus said, "**I am**; and you shall see *THE SON OF MAN SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF POWER, and COMING WITH THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN.*" **Mark 14:61-62**

### **3. I Am the Bread of Life**

Jesus said to them, "**I am the bread of life**; he who comes to Me shall not hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. **John 6:35**

### **4. I Am not of this world**

And He was saying to them, "You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, **I am not of this world**. "I said therefore to you, that you shall die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He, you shall die in your sins." **John 8:23-24**

### **5. I AM**

Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, **before Abraham was born, I am.**" **John 8:58**  
He who has seen Me has seen the Father **John 14:9**

### **6. I Am the Door, the way the truth the Life**

Jesus therefore said to them again, "Truly, truly, I say to you, **I am the door of the sheep**. "All who came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. "**I am the door**; if anyone enters through Me, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. "The thief comes only to steal, and kill, and destroy; I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly. **John 10:10**  
Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me. **John 14:6**

### **7. I am the vine**

"**I am the vine**, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing. **John 15:5**

### **8. I Am the resurrection and the life**

Jesus said to her, "**I am the resurrection and the life**; he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?" **John 11:25-26**

The clear claims of Scripture regarding Christ along with the bold declarations of Jesus Himself force us to a definite choice regarding Christ. Besides these unmistakable direct claims, there were many other private and public teachings concerning His identity. These claims were not without testimony and witness as to their reality.

## **B. The witnesses**

### **1. God**

Three times God the Father bore public testimony to His Son.

*"This is my dearly loved Son in whom I am well pleased."*

*"There is another who testifies of Me, and I know that the testimony which He gives about Me is true*

*"And the Father who sent Me, He has testified of Me. **John 5:32, 37***

### **2. Miracles**

Jesus did not perform miracles to draw a crowd. Unlike many of those claiming miraculous powers today, Jesus often stopped when crowds began to gather. Jesus lifted on a cross was to draw men to himself. He executed all His miracles for a purpose. They relieved suffering and bore testimony to His claims and that God was truly among them.

*"But the testimony which I have is greater than the testimony of John; for the works which the Father has given Me to accomplish—the very works that I do—testify about Me, that the Father has sent Me. **John 5:36***

Declaration as the bread of life preceded the feeding of 10,000 plus people.

Declaration as the light of the world preceded healing of a man born blind.

Declaration as the resurrection and the life preceded raising Lazarus from the dead.

Declaration to forgive sins as God who alone can forgive preceded healing of a lame man.

When John the Baptist, who bore convincing and passionate testimony to the identity of Christ, struggled in prison with the apparent failure and disintegration of his ministry, he sent messengers to inquire of Jesus. Are you the Christ? Jesus sent back this answer.

*Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and report to John what you hear and see: the BLIND RECEIVE SIGHT and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM. Matt 11:4-5*

Look at the works and miracles predicted in the Scriptures. Listen to the words, the message, the good news of salvation.

### **3. The Resurrection**

The ultimate proof of his claims is what we celebrate today.

*Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh, who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord, Romans 1:1-4*

Many have claimed to be Jesus. Some may even perform some astonishing works by supernatural means. In the last days, the anti-Christ will pull off some most amazing wonders. Only Jesus conquered the most dreaded enemy - death. All others died and stayed that way. Only Jesus returned bodily and appeared to hundreds of witnesses confirming every claim He ever made concerning Himself and the Father and life hereafter.

### **4. Disciples and others directly touched by this one solitary life.**

Multiple eyewitnesses went to their death affirming the reality of this incomparable Christ who walked this earth, dramatically touched their lives, died for their sin, rose again from the dead and ascended into heaven.

He impacted both individuals and groups.

#### **a) The witness of children**

He blessed them, healed them, included them

#### **b) The witness of His family (parents and siblings)**

They believed in Him and eventually died for Him.

#### **c) The witness of the morally challenged**

Adulterous women, prostitutes, tax collectors, loan sharks, thieves, murderers

#### **d) The witness of common folk**

Despised shepherds, fisherman, carpenters followed Him to the death.

#### **e) The witness of the physically challenged**

The Blind, deaf, lame and crippled, untouchable Lepers, dead people found new life

#### **f) The witness of demonized men and women set free**

#### **g) The witness of military men**

“Speak the word.” “Truly this was the Son of God.”

#### **h) The witness of some religious elite**

Nicodemus, Joseph of Aramathia, Paul

#### **i) The witness of His disciples**

All suffered and died for their belief in the resurrected Christ.

Not one of them recanted their testimony concerning the resurrection to save their neck. This eyewitness testimony presents a most convincing case. Through the centuries many have tried to convince us that this was a religious hoax, a myth, a human fabrication to draw followers. Not many will continue to hold onto a known lie in the face of losing their very lives. We have the most incredible claims and the testimony of a multitude of credible witnesses which leaves us with a most interesting dilemma.

### **C. The dilemma**

Many express a willingness to accept Jesus as a good man, a gifted prophet, a moral teacher and even a messenger from God. But is that enough, given the facts concerning His life and teaching and person proclamations? Taking the number of bold claims into consideration, one faces a definite logical dilemma. Either Jesus is everything He claimed to be (Lord), or he deliberately deceived His followers (liar) or He was self-deluded as to His true identity (lunatic). Liar, lunatic or Lord?

If he was anything other than who He claimed to be, then he should not be considered a good man or a gifted man or a prophet or a messenger from God. No other religious leader made such claims concerning themselves. Certainly, numerous people have made such grandiose claims but ended up in jail or a mental hospital.

And for sure, none of them ever rose from the dead to prove their claims! No liar stands the test of time and the scrutiny of history and critics. No lunatic could ever unveil such profound teaching as we find in the teachings of Jesus. If indeed Jesus was God come to the earth in the flesh to draw all men to himself, you would expect monumental world-wide impact world. A mere glance through history attests to the unrivaled impact of Jesus. The whole world still unmistakably lies under the influence of this one solitary life. Christ and those who continue His ministry (the Church) until His return have indelibly marked all human history.

## **III. History amply records the immensity of His personal influence**

### **A. The way we view and value human life under His influence**

#### **1. Children**

Children were property and their lives were treated lightly. Many parents abandoned unwanted babies. Babies were routinely sacrificed to the gods. Due to the Christian influence Emperor Justinian decreed the Justinian code.

*“Those who expose children, possibly hope they would die, and those who use the potions of the abortionist, are subject to the full penalty of the law for murder. Should exposure occur, the finder of the child is to see that he is baptized and that he is treated with Christian care and compassion. They may be then adopted even as we ourselves have been adopted into the kingdom of grace.*

#### **2. Women**

Even while on earth, Jesus brought dignity to women and their cause. Christianity teaches that women are to be granted honor as fellow heirs of the grace of life. Men are to sacrificially love their wives, cherish them as their own bodies.

#### **3. The elderly**

Even though some cultures honored their elderly, without the influence of Christian teaching and heart change, many disposed of them as a bother. Even today, the further from biblical teachings we stray the more dangerous it is to get old.

#### **4. Slavery**

Christianity was influential first in regulating treatment of slaves and then eventually became the catalyst for abolishing it. Christianity affected thinking in many other ways regarding human life, the gladiator arena eventually disappeared through Christian influence, suicide decreased, even animal rights are a result of Christian thinking and respect for God's creation.

### **B. The way we treat one another under His influence**

The influence of Christ has greatly influenced how we treat people less fortunate, elderly, sick, handicapped.

Kindness and selflessness is a product of the teaching of Jesus.

Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

Forgive as the Father has forgiven you.

Love even your enemies.

Let no unwholesome word proceed out of your mouth.

Give to the poor and needy.

Care for the widow and orphan is the result of Christians.

These are all powerful teachings of Jesus which have impacted how people treat one another. You will not find a governmental welfare or social security system taught in the Bible. The Bible teaches that the needs of the needy are best met by the church and the compassion of neighbors and the community.

So many of the relief and service organizations were started by Christians and even bear Christian names.

Salvation Army, Samaritans purse, YMCA, Rescue Missions, AA.

Current surveys verify that religious people tend to be more generous. A gallop poll concluded that those who attend church regularly were far more likely to give a higher percentage of their household income to charitable causes. Every year religious institutions contribute \$19 billion to care for children elderly, education, health, food for the hungry and housing for the homeless. Add to that some \$6 billion in volunteer labor and you have significant impact and demonstration of compassion all in the name of Jesus. Jesus declared such compassion would distinguish His followers.

*“They will know you are Christians by your love.”*

### **C. Education under His influence**

There is no end to the influence of Christ on education. The first printed book was the Bible. The clergy were the most educated people in the community. Jesus believed in teaching. Jesus instructed his disciples to make disciples of all nations “teaching” them to observe all he taught them. In the early days of the Puritans the “New England Primer” taught the alphabet with Scripture. Many of our most famous schools today began as seminaries to train pastors. Every collegiate institution founded in the colonies prior to the Revolutionary War – except for the University of Pennsylvania, was established by some branch of the Christian church.

Recognize any of these schools.

Harvard, Yale, William and Mary, Brown, Princeton, New Your University, Northwestern University, Dartmouth, Columbia.

An ad for Colombia University (King’s College) read: “The chief thing that is aimed at in this college is to teach and engage children to know God in Jesus Christ.

The president of Princeton said, “Cursed be all learning that is contrary to the cross of Christ.”

Harvard, “the great end of all education is to know the Lord Jesus Christ who is eternal life.”

In 1837 the modern public education system emerged under the influence of Horace man who considered the idea of the educational system for all the children of America in the hands of the Christian church to be deplorable and dedicated himself to doing something about it. AA Hodge of Princeton predicted the consequences of ripping education from its foundation in Christianity over a hundred years ago.

*“I am as sure as I am of Christ’s reign that a comprehensive and centralized system of national education, separated from religion, as is now commonly proposed, will prove the most appalling engine for the propagation of anti-Christian and atheistic unbelief, and of anti-social nihilistic ethics, individual, social and political, which this sin-rent world has ever seen.”*

### **D. The founding of America under His influence**

Contrary to what we hear heralded today, the founding fathers had no intention of separating church and state as it is practiced today. The original intent of the Fathers was to protect religion from government encroachment not government from religious influence. The original documents abound with references and promotion of faith in God. George Washington said in his farewell address.

*“And let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion.”*

*"It cannot be emphasized too strongly or too often that this great nation was founded, not by religionists, but by Christians; not on religions, but on the gospel of Jesus Christ! For this very reason peoples of other faiths have been afforded asylum, prosperity, and freedom of worship." --Patrick Henry*

### **E. Civil liberties under His influence**

The basis of increasing civil liberties can be traced back to its foundations in Christianity and the teachings of Christ and the Biblical view of the dignity of all human life.

### **F. Science under His influence**

The original motivation of modern science was to discover more about God by understanding more about what He created. Many of the early great scientists were devout believers or at least recognized the existence of God who created all things.

### **G. Economics under His Influence**

The Bible and the teaching of Christianity abound with practical and godly principles of finance and business and the propagation of a strong work ethic.

### **H. Our views of sex and the family under His influence**

Jesus did not repress sexuality; He liberated it by reinforcing the God-designed protective boundaries. God provides dignity and protection for husbands, wives and children in the Bible.

### **I. Health and medicine under His influence**

Jesus elevated concern for the physical needs of people.

*Before the influence of Christianity on the world, hospitals existed only for soldiers, gladiators, and slaves. Manual laborers and other poor individuals had no place for refuge. Men feared death, and took little interest in the sick, but often drove them out of the house, and left them to their fate.*

Out of compassion for the sick, hospitals became a place of refuge. Many of our hospitals still bear Christian names or names that associate them with the church. As early as 325AD bishops of the church were instructed to go out into every cathedral city in Christendom and start a hospital. Motivation to serve and relive suffering has its foundations in the teachings of Christ. Only when greed becomes the motivation do we find an alarming shift in care.

### **J. Morality under His Influence**

Much of our concept of ethics and morality finds its foundation in the teaching of Christ and the Ten Commandments. In contrast to the barbarous practices of the culture, Christianity brought peace, justice, fairness. Today we want to remove the influence or deny such influence by removing the Ten Commandments from the hall of justice and our institutions of learning as we try to separate God from morality. We remove The Ten Commandments from schools for fear they might unduly influence students to actually practice them.

### **K. Arts and Music under His influence**

Literature, music, sculpture, art, architecture all bear the stamp of Christ's influence. In times of urgent crises, where do people turn? What do they sing? They turn and pray to God. They sing "Amazing Grace".

## **Conclusion**

Very few things in our world have escaped the touch of Christ's influence.

*He stands forth upon the highest pinnacle of heavenly glory, proclaimed of God, affirmed by angels, adored by saints and feared by devils, as the living, personal Christ, our Lord and Savior.*

No matter who you are or what your relationship, I urge you to respond to Him today. Such majesty, such mercy, such sacrifice demands a response.

Give Him a R.O.S.E to celebrate Easter this week.

## **Receive Him**

*And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. 1 John 5:11-12*

*As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. John 1:9-13*

## **Obey Him**

## **Serve Him**

## **Expect His Soon Return**