

## WOR(L)DBUILDING

*(The Secular Scriptures)*



The gospel is the most sophisticated mind device that exists. It is the most sophisticated institutional and individual transformation tool and catalyst that exists.

The gospel is responsible for a nation's highest asset, its constitution, and therefore for law and order, the righteous constructs by which a society governs itself. The gospel of Jesus is responsible for the institution of marriage, one of the most foundational pillars of society. God made them man and woman. Gender itself is an institution of God, and within it, the family unit, the quiet decision that every new human being introduced into the world should come from a predecessor who had already gone before. There is a brilliance to this civilizational design that could not have come from a random explosion in dark clouds.

The gospel is responsible for the institution of charity, charity as an act of responsibility, not goodwill. It is responsible for the advent and continuous development of technology. Think of Noah when he builds the ark. It is responsible for the architects of society in the knowledge economy. Think of the Daniels of the Bible. Think of Joseph, with policy implementation never before seen in its sophistication, that saved a nation and many others from famine for over a decade.

The gospel is responsible for health, yes, for the most primal and foundational of health practices. Think of the Levitical order, and the practice of isolating the sick so they do not contaminate others, a proxy for quarantine practiced long before modern medicine gave it a name.

It is responsible for curbing criminality, for justice, for the establishment of witness and testimony. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall a matter be established. This is the seed from which jury duty still grows today, ordinary people gathered as witnesses to settle what is true.

The gospel is responsible for many other facets of society and industrialization, more than I am equipped to name. But the gospel is many, many things. And most of all, the God of the gospel has given us all these as free gifts, gifts that have evolved into the many facets of human civilization that stand before us today.

So why then is it such an aberration to hear the same message in its purest, most distilled form, in the name Jesus, in the message of the good news of the Bible? The gospel did not arrive after the world already had its order.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Before the first constitution, before the first code carved into stone, before Confucius taught order to a fractured people, there was Adam. There was Cain and Abel, and the first blood the ground ever had to answer for. There was Noah, building the first work of engineering the world had ever seen, on the instruction of a God who does not speak without purpose.

No man had ever seen rain fall from the sky. The God of the gospel handed a single man a blueprint for a vessel that would outlast a flood the world had no name for yet, because He had not needed one. That is the first engineering document in human history, and it did not come from a guild or an academy. It came from the mouth of God.

This is a pattern, not an isolated mercy. Watch what He did even with the ones who ran from Him. Cain murdered his brother and was driven out, marked, sent east of Eden. And yet the descendants of Cain became the first to work bronze and iron, the first metalworkers the earth ever produced. Cain did not walk in God's path. His line did not walk in God's path. But the God of the gospel let them live, let them build, let them forge, because that is what He does even for the disobedient. He gives rain to the just and the unjust. He lets the sun rise on people who never once looked up to thank Him for it.

Sit with what that provision actually cost Him. He gave that gift knowing full well what hands would hold it and what they would do with it, bronze into blades, blades into war, and He handed it over

anyway. This is the shape of the thing He calls free will. The right to say yes or to say no, and to still be permitted a life inside a world He authored, regardless of the answer.

Loyalty does not ask you anything. It does not beg a choice from you, it simply demands compliance. Love is a choice. Love is a costly commitment that will ask you at some point to sacrifice something for another. This is why God did not build a universe of loyal subjects. He built one of free agents, capable of walking away, capable of forging bronze in defiance of the very hand that let them live long enough to swing the hammer.

I should say clearly what I mean by the gospel here, because it is bigger than the four books that carry the name. Gospel means good news. The gospel is the good news that comes from a God who is good. And if God is good, then God is the only true reference point for good, wherever it shows up and whoever it shows up through. So when an invention comes from Elon Musk, or from an atheist, or from a gay man like Peter Thiel, or from a Muslim somewhere in a mountain village, or from a Buddhist monastery, that invention is still a channel of a good God's goodness moving through a world He built to be inventive. He did not reserve His provision for people who use His name correctly.

And yes, in a way, the same God could be blamed for the wars. If He had not given Hitler free will, perhaps the world would have been spared what came of it. But free will was never going to arrive without responsibility attached to it, without decision, without the weight of consequence sitting inside the gift. We are still free agents, every one of us, which is also why the gospel of salvation was never forced on anyone either, despite what it cost Him. It cost Him His only begotten Son. And even that, the most expensive gift ever given, He still left ours to accept or refuse.

The Word was not summoned into being by human need. Human institutions were summoned into being by the Word.

Every constitution that has ever governed a nation is a shadow cast by a law that was already written on stone before Sinai and on the conscience before Sinai. Every act of charity is a faint echo of a God who gave first, and gave everything, and asked nothing in return. Every marriage is a small enactment of a covenant that existed before Adam had a wife, when God Himself declared that it was not good for man to be alone.

Every quarantine, every witness rule, every policy that has ever fed a starving nation, these are not achievements that Christianity happened to be present for. They are the gospel, working itself out in flesh, through Josephs and Daniels and Noahs who were simply obedient to what they were shown.

Catholicism has blood on record. The Puritans built colonies on cruelty they called conviction. Civilizations have been wiped out under a cross carried by hands that never once carried the heart of the One it belonged to. I am not excusing a page of it.

But that was never the gospel. Neither was it the God of the gospel. A man can plant a flag in soil and call it holy while doing something the planter Himself would weep over. That is not the fruit's fault, and it is certainly not the planter's.

So do not ask me why the name Jesus offends. Ask instead why the fruit is welcome at every table, and the Planter is not.

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Blurb: An essay arguing that the institutions civilization treats as secular, law, marriage, charity, technology, justice, trace back to the same divine source, and that the good God of the gospel deserves the same welcome as the gifts He gave.

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