

Jesus Still Walks

Kanye West Wanders and Wreaks Havoc

Over the past couple of weeks, there has been renewed speculation into what's wrong with Kanye West. He made his debut with "Jesus Walks," and the Negro spiritual "I Want Jesus to Walk With Me" playing in the background. A song in which he proclaims "the way school need teachers" and "the way Kathie Lee needed Regis, that's the way I need Jesus." Kanye's lyrics demonstrated a level of humility, remorse, and a desire for a new beginning:

*And I don't think there is nothing I can do now to right my wrongs
I want to talk to God, but I'm afraid because we ain't spoke in so long
God show me the way because the Devil's tryin' to break me down*

Yet Mr. West had confidence that Jesus would not only walk with him, but also:

*To the hustlers, killers, murderers, drug dealers even the strippers
(Jesus walks for them)
To the victims of welfare for we living in hell here hell yeah
(Jesus walks for them)*

Embed from Getty Images

So Kanye seems to have gone from recognition that he's on the wrong path and repentance for what he's done along that path to becoming an evangelist—inviting outcasts to come to Jesus. He seemed to be on the verge of taking part in the church's mission to reach people the church struggles to connect with.

That Was Then

However, that was before he publicly confessed that he sold his soul to the devil. It was also before he referred to himself as Jesus. And none of the former humility was present when he boldly stated that if the Bible was written today, then he would be in it—because of how important he is. (You can look all that up on YouTube. I don't want to deprive you of the thrill of discovery.)

His defenders will say critics just don't understand his musical genius. They'll say he was just entertaining or being parabolic when he said he sold his soul. He's just a deep, independent thinker. . . Perhaps I should let another line of "Jesus Walks" answer that:

We rappers is role models: we rap, we don't think

The “Choice” of Many

Perhaps a little more thought is in order before a black man says that black people chose to stay in slavery. Perhaps a little more homework would have informed West of freedom fighters like Denmark Vesey, Gabriel Prosser, Nat Turner, Madison Washington, and Charles Deslondes. Such homework will point out that freedom was often thwarted by blacks who sold their souls and their own people to stay in the good graces of their masters. Such homework will point out that every effort at freedom only resulted in stricter, more inhumane slave codes –upheld and enforced by every branch of government.

Negro spirituals like “I want Jesus to walk with me” developed not because there was a market for them, but because there was almost no physical or familial consolation available. Enslaved people were treated worse than animals and maliciously separated from family on a regular basis to maintain social control. Jesus heard their cries and He did walk with them. That’s the only reason they–we–didn’t become extinct. Jesus walked with and preserved blacks (and Natives) in America, as a testimony against it.

Wishful for Yesteryear

Whenever zealous movements to return to yesteryear “greatness” when the founding fathers were all “christian” champions of liberty and justice, the historical witness of hundreds of years of stolen land and labor confront the conscience of the United States of Amnesia. Lowercase “c” is intentional because many of them were Deists and even those who proclaimed Christ, practiced and cooperated with the devilish subjugation of other humans. They weren’t merely products of their times, but producers of their times. Just review this portion of Thomas Jefferson’s first draft of the Declaration of Independence:

“He [King George III] has waged cruel war against human nature itself, violating it’s most sacred rights of life and liberty in the persons of a distant people who never offended him, captivating and carrying them into slavery in another hemisphere, or to incur miserable death in their transportation hither. This piratical warfare, the opprobrium of infidel powers, is the warfare of the Christian king of Great Britain.”

White-washed

Wonder why the condemnation of slavery didn’t survive the final edit? Since they were establishing a new nation upon the virtues of life and liberty, couldn’t they have ended this “cruel war against human nature”? Why did Jefferson continue to build his fortune on the backs of hundreds of “people

who never offended him”?

These are questions that anyone, especially a black man, needs to answer when promoting MAGA (Make America Great Again). What era of greatness do you want us to return to? Who was it great for? What did that greatness cost others? And would Jesus walk in support of that? The redcap PR specialists know the historical references they're rallying around, but West has betrayed the historical figures that helped him live the life he now enjoys.

Where Jesus Walks Now

Yes, Jesus still walks, even when we go astray. I hope Kanye still acknowledges his need of Him. We all need Jesus. Many of us still sing in one way or another of our desire for Him to walk with us. How can we know we're walking on the right path to meet Him? Should we save up for a tour of Jerusalem to see where He once walked? Or is church the only place He's walking now?

Thank God the answer to the last question is NO!

Church is a good place to reunite on a weekly basis with others who enjoy walking with Jesus. But He is much more accessible than that. If walking or talking with Jesus scares you because its been a long time, consider the next few passages.

- Romans 8:31-34 (God's Word): "If God is for us, who can be against us? God didn't spare his own Son but handed him over [to death] for all of us. . . Who will accuse those whom God has chosen? . . Christ has died, and more importantly, he was brought back to life. Christ has the highest position in heaven. Christ also intercedes for us." *In other words, Jesus is only a prayer away. He sees, hears, and is acting on your behalf. God has already shown there is nothing He won't do to give you a meaningful and eternal life.*
- Psalm 34:18 (God's Word): "The LORD is near to those whose hearts are humble. He saves those whose spirits are crushed." *When we're at our lowest, that is when Jesus is likely the closest. Call on Him during good times and bad. Our great need is our most powerful argument for Him to walk us. But pride and self-sufficiency is like repellent in His presence.*
- Romans 8:26 (God's Word): "At the same time the Spirit also helps us in our weakness, because we don't know how to pray for what we need. But the Spirit intercedes along with our groans that cannot be expressed in words." *Praying isn't so much about knowing the right words to say. God is looking for quality time and honest conversation with us. His Spirit knows our intentions and helps get our thoughts together.*

Finally, an interesting perspective on that trip to Jerusalem in order to walk with Jesus:

“Some. . . feel that a great object would be gained if their feet could tread the soil of old Jerusalem. But God’s cause and work will never be advanced by His workers wandering about to find where Jesus traveled and wrought His miracles. Would you trace the footsteps of Christ, behold Him in that hovel, ministering to the poor; see Him at that sick bed, comforting the suffering, and speaking hope and courage to the desponding. Those who walk in the footsteps of Jesus will do as He did. ‘Whosoever will come after me,’ He said, ‘let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me’” (E.G. White, *Pastoral Ministry*, p. 224).

Jesus still walks. Are we walking with Him?