



Links Players

IDOLS | ULTIMATE VS. PENULTIMATE “STORIES”

And one of the elders said to me, “Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll [story] and its seven seals. (Revelation 5:5, ESV)

“I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: I’m ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don’t accept his claim to be God... A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic — on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg — or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice.” — C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity.

This devotional is intentionally designed to “stir the pot.” The idea isn’t to settle the debate about the greatest round ever played; that, in some ways, is a matter of personal preference, much like one’s favorite ice cream.

Researching the writings of golf columnists over the past hundred years using criteria such as the strength of the field, course difficulty, and the event’s significance, certain names keep emerging as the top four: Johnny Miller, Jack Nicklaus, Ben Hogan, and Greg Norman.

Topping the list, with no surprise to golf enthusiasts, is Johnny Miller’s final round of the 1973 U.S. Open at Oakmont. He began the final round six shots back and shot an 8-under 63 to win on one of the game’s hardest championship courses— Johnny’s play that day is considered the “greatest round ever.”

A close second and my personal favorite was Jack Nicklaus’ 65 in the final round of the 1986 Masters. The Golden Bear was allegedly past his prime. He surprised the world with a back-nine 30 to win his 18th major. Among other reasons for considering Jack’s play the greatest round ever are his age at the time, the occasion, the venue, and the pressure of the moment— “pure magic!”

Unlike that fun debate, deciding who was the greatest person and what was the greatest moment in history is based on objective facts; approaching life as if Jesus and his resurrection are on equal footing with other contenders is the textbook definition of idolatry.

A fascinating debate surrounds the question of “the greatest day in history.” Reviewing past articles, books, essays, and opinion pieces, the list includes a handful of extraordinary moments in human history.

At the top of the list of epoch-defining moments are the Apollo Moon Landing on July 20, 1969, VE Day on May 8, 1945, Armistice Day on November 11, 1918, the fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989, and the signing of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776.

Without question, we should celebrate all these human accomplishments. Landing on the moon, ending Nazi tyranny, toppling Communist walls, and drafting political documents for liberty and equality were remarkable, to say the least.

But when we examine the person of Jesus, his death, and resurrection, we are dealing with someone and something that no ordinary human could accomplish. In short, Jesus is not just highly accomplished among humans; rather, he is in a completely different class.

Many people have tried to turn his-story into just another “myth,” to reduce his life and teachings to nothing more than a moral code, or, worse, to treat him as just another god in the pantheon of gods, and they miss the point by miles.

When we try to squeeze his-story inside a frame guided only by unaided human reason, we have tee’d off in front of the markers. In other words, we have a false start. In stroke play, one can begin again with a penalty of two shots.

In life, when faced with the claims of Jesus Christ, we can only truly begin to understand when the Holy Spirit supernaturally opens our hearts, minds, and eyes. Otherwise, we get off to a false start.

Jesus’ death and resurrection are the cornerstone events of history. To base our lives on anything else, or to make the grave mistake of treating him with indifference, is to waste our entire purpose for existence.

All efforts to center one’s life on important but secondary stories indicate a massive misunderstanding of the significance of both Jesus and the resurrection and demonstrate a colossal blindness to the “big story.”

Turn to Jesus Christ and truly live!

Prayer: Holy Spirit! Please open my heart, mind, and eyes to the supreme reality of all history— JESUS CHRIST!

