

Jesus and Darth Vader

The latest Star Wars movie, Episode III, is very entertaining! For those of us who have seen all 6 episodes now, the plot turns and the weird aliens and the light saber battles have kept us intrigued for decades.

Most of us are aware that there are religious overtones throughout the Star Wars movies. And most of us are smart enough to know that the religious ideas presented are basically a decidedly western version of eastern religions.

For instance, the benefits of emptying your mind in meditation so that you can tap into the power of the “force” are extolled. There is no corollary presentation of frightened people paying extortion money to a shaman so he will keep evil spirits from being angry. In the west people want the good karma they think they will receive from yoga, but do not understand how much fear is involved for many in the practice of the real thing in the east.

That brings me to an interesting exchange in Episode III. After Anakin becomes Lord Vader, he gets into a saber duel with Obi Won Kenobi. It includes verbal barbs as well. In the thick of the fight Obi Won Kenobi laments that Vader has gone over to the dark side, knowing he has because “only Siths deal in absolutes.”

It was at that point I nearly choked on my popcorn! Did George Lucas really mean to have Obi Won Kenobi, beloved character, suggest that people who believe in absolute truth are the bad guys, akin to Darth Vader? If you have ever heard him interviewed, it’s about the only conclusion you can draw, unfortunately! I joked with my children afterwards that maybe I should be called “Darth Pastor.”

Unfortunately, the whole subject is not a laughing matter. It reminded me of a conversation I had with someone who adhered to an eastern religion a few years ago. Trying to show the necessity of making at least some moral judgments, I referred to a recent article that had spoken of baby girls being left for dead in one country because they were not wanted. I asked the person, “Can’t you say that practice is wrong.” Her answer was this: “I can’t say it is wrong, it just is.”

Pressing her a little further, I tried to see if she could call anything wrong: the terrible acts of Hitler or Stalin, for instance. She could not- her religious worldview taught her that there was no objective basis to call anything wrong. Things just are the way they are, so accept it and you will find personal serenity. A similar take would be that all we perceive to be unjust is just an illusion anyway, so just detach yourself and stop worrying.

I am so glad that most people reject that line of reasoning, even if they don’t understand why. We rely on absolute truth far more than we realize for much that we take for granted. I am glad that William and Catherine Booth and other Christians believed in a gospel that could change hearts and improve living conditions for the world’s masses.

I am thankful that Jesus presented absolute truth to chart your life upon, and to change the world with. There were many things that Jesus was dogmatic about. For instance, at least 25 times in the gospel of John, he began a statement by twice saying AMEN. The word AMEN indicates a strong affirmation of what is declared. Saying it twice in succession is like saying, "Now hear this!"

Here are some of the things Lord Jesus double "AMENED:"

Amen, Amen- I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.
John 3:3

Amen, Amen- I say to you, he who hears my words and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.
John 5:24

Amen, Amen- I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life. John 6:47

Amen, Amen- I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM. John 8:58

Amen, Amen- I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. John 10:7

Amen, Amen- I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. John 13:16

Amen, Amen- I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father. John 14:12

It is precisely because Christians have believed the absolute nature of such statements that has led them to go around the world preaching salvation in Jesus' name, and has also led them to open hospitals and orphanages and do a world of good in Jesus' name!

May the Spirit be with you!

Danny Campbell <><