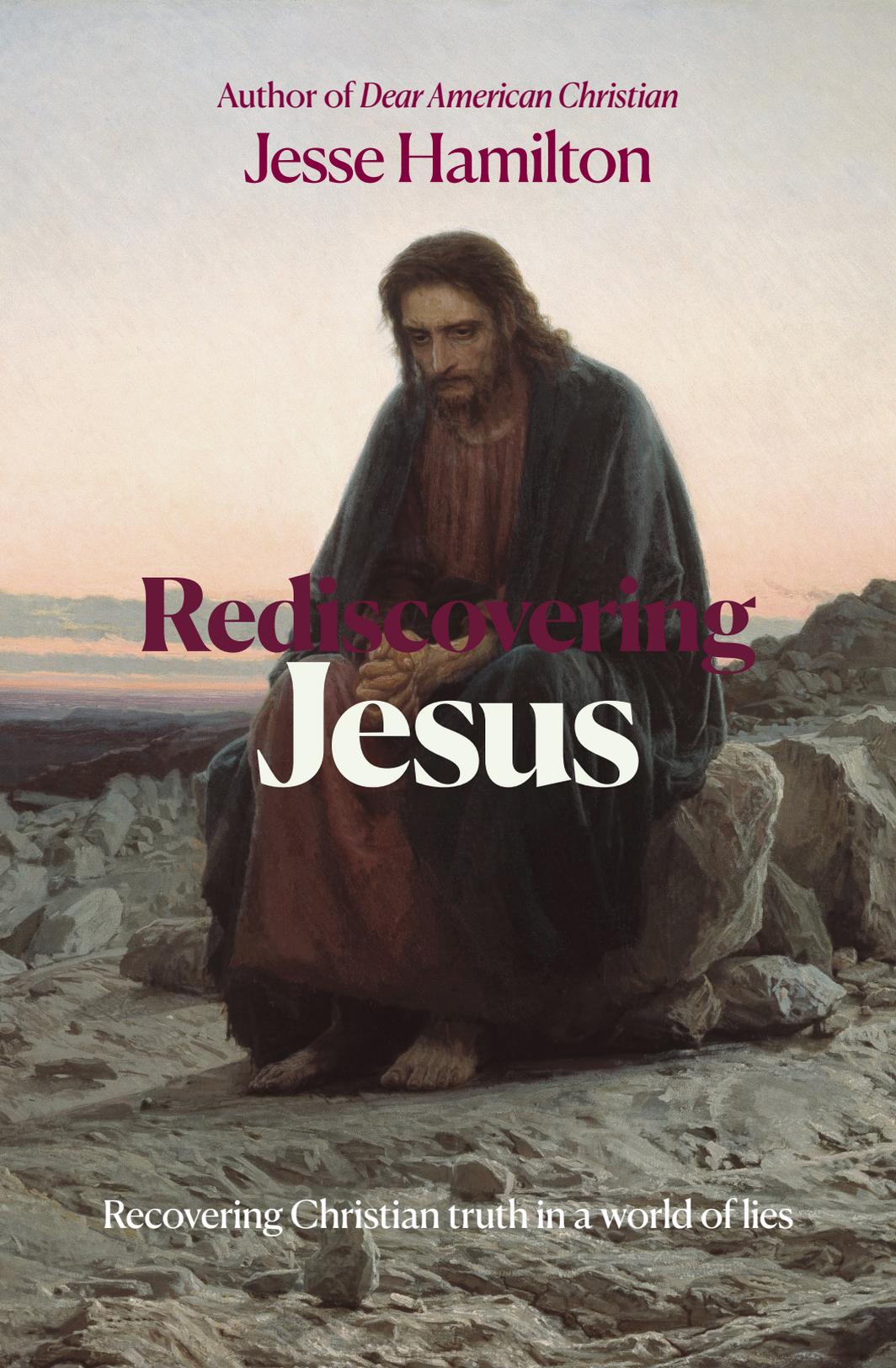


Author of *Dear American Christian*

Jesse Hamilton



Rediscovering
Jesus

Recovering Christian truth in a world of lies

Jesse Hamilton

Rediscovering Jesus

A very short online book

© Jesse Hamilton 2026.

Cover photo: *Christ in the Desert* by Ivan Kramskoy

Table of Contents

5	Prologue
7	Jesus Had Nothing To Do With Politics

Prologue

I shouldn't be writing this book. For one thing, I've already written it—several times over, in fact. I've published four books in practical theology, and each one has dealt with problems in the Christian church, in particular the Evangelical Protestant church, to which I (somewhat reluctantly) belong. Each book had basically the same point—that Christianity in general today, especially in the West, is, to quote Kramer, *way off*. To write another such book might be overkill; but there's a big difference with this one.

In the other books, I was writing to Christians. In this book, I'm writing to everyone else.

In my first books, I was hoping to stir up a few Christians to make changes. I did—one or two. For the most part, it was a bit like breaking wind in a hurricane. The only people who noticed were those close to me, and they pretended not to notice.

At this point, I'm pretty much done worrying about the state of the church. Outside of a miracle, I think widespread change is hopeless. I'm more concerned at the present about unbelievers—those who by now are probably so turned off by Christianity that they will never take it seriously again, if they ever did.

Please, my non-Christian friend, don't throw it all out just yet. I beg you. There are still a few Christians, even in this country, who think the whole current scene is a disaster and are terribly frustrated. For sure, some of the issues are complex—but the solutions being offered are for the most part worthless. (Strong language, to be sure, but

right now strong language is needed.) Our nation has perhaps never been this bad off, but perhaps neither has the church.

As with all my online books, I'll keep this short and simple. I know attention spans are dwindling, and so is my patience. Each chapter should take around 5-7 minutes to read, and the whole book an hour or less. My aim is to present simple Christian truths as accurately as possible, focusing on areas that the church at the moment has rather hopelessly confused. Only the text of the Bible and the life and teaching of Jesus will be my guide. My goal is not to persuade you that Christianity is true; that's another book for another time. My goal is simply to explain how far off mainstream Christianity is and to provide you with the most accurate, clear, and simple explanation of what the Bible actually says that I can. I'll throw in a few Bible references, but most of it you'll have to look up for yourself—which you should do anyway.

I've been thinking seriously about this stuff for several decades, and believe me, it's really not that complex. It only gets confusing, frankly, when the church starts losing sight of Jesus. Of course, some of what I say you might not like, but let's be honest, if you're going to reject something, you need to reject the real thing, not a fake.

Let's get into it.

Chapter 1

Jesus Had Nothing to do With Politics—For a Very Good Reason

Why don't we wade right into the deepest, murkiest part of this whole boggy mess? That's right—politics. Here's the simple truth on that.

Jesus had nothing to do with it.

You read that right. Jesus couldn't care less about earthly political power—getting it, keeping it, who has it, what they are doing with it—*nothing*. His disciples, who guided the church after his resurrection, didn't either. Read the New Testament. Both Jesus and his first followers had one main teaching on politics: give the government what it wants; don't cause trouble. Why? It's simple. Because Jesus was starting his own kingdom, and what he was after is a whole other kettle of fish.

It starts with Jesus's first words—*repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand*. Go to the earliest gospel account, the gospel of Mark, and check it out. And now think about it: the *kingdom of God*. In other words, says Jesus, I am here to announce—more importantly, to inaugurate—a whole new kingdom, the biggest, grandest kingdom of all, the kingdom to end all kingdoms—literally. The kingdom of God. In other places in the gospels, he calls it the “kingdom of Heaven.” In the New Testament it is clear that all of history has been leading to this point—and next up will be what

Jesus calls the “end of the age,” at which time He will finally and fully reign over heaven and earth.

Jesus makes it clear that his kingdom is “not of this world”—which is why his followers didn’t fight back when he was arrested. In other words, this kingdom is starting now, but it will finally and fully be established *after* the present age, in a time period Jesus refers to as the “age to come.” And all throughout his earthly ministry he called people to one great goal: getting into this kingdom and helping others to do the same. From now on, he makes clear, this is pretty much the point of life. Everything has changed.

Famously, his disciples didn’t get it at first. They thought, understandably for them, that Jesus would be restoring the earthly kingdom of Israel. They asked him about it a number of times. It wasn’t until Jesus was resurrected that they got it. My kingdom is not for the here and now, he told them. And again, you’d better make sure you make it in. And then go tell everyone else about it—and keep doing that until I return.

I should probably stop this book right here. I mean, seriously, if people could just get hold of this one truth, probably everything would change for the better. Because the applications of this point are enormous and far-reaching. The most obvious one I will state right now: the church of Jesus and any earthly government should never be joined, precisely because Jesus has inaugurated his own separate kingdom. The church, established after Jesus’s resurrection, is to be a little picture of this future kingdom, with its own leaders and spiritual business. It carries out the mission of the kingdom of God on earth until Jesus returns. Church and state can never be joined, then, because they

are two different kingdoms, of two different time periods. They have different loyalties and different priorities. Period, end of story.

Well, almost. I know, I know—the whole politics issue is a bit more complicated than this, especially in our times. Jesus didn't care about politics, some might argue, because he *couldn't* get involved. Sure, he could have taken over in an instant, but people in those times couldn't do what we can do today—engage in so-called political activism. Because in our times so many governments around the world are more democratic, citizens today can get involved and make real changes. If the first Christians could have done that, the argument goes, they would have.

Perhaps so—but let's back up a bit. There is a story to be told—the story of how Christianity slowly came to get more and more involved in politics, so much so that church and state were thoroughly intertwined. It's a well-known story, so I'll keep it brief.

Starting with the waning days of the Roman Empire, under the influence of Constantine, Christianity went from being illegal, to legal, to—well—effectively ruling. Since then it's been nothing less than a nightmare of entanglement and disentanglement. The Reformation didn't help; views were mixed on the matter during that time. Finally, we got to the point where nations such as America decided to keep church and state separate—but now there are calls to reunite them. *From within the church.*

So back to our question—would Jesus or the first Christians have gotten involved in political processes in order to effect change? So many people would simply say yes; but to be perfectly honest, when you read the New Testament, especially the gospel accounts and then the

Book of Acts, which tells the story of the ministries of Jesus's first disciples (at this point called apostles)—I'm not so sure. Jesus didn't need any help from any political authorities, obviously, and as you read through the gospels, it was clear he had a very strong sense of his own authority, mission, and methods. I have a strong suspicion that if Jesus were alive today, he would be very averse to associating with any earthly state in any way, shape, or form.

But to go so far as to argue that Christians today should not be involved in politics at all might be going too far in the other direction. As we have said, it is fairly obvious from the life and teaching of Jesus that church and state should never be joined; yet it also seems fairly clear that since political decisions affect ordinary citizens, and since we all can have some part in that, Christians actually *should* be involved in politics—to the degree that they can actually help people for the better. There are numerous examples from history of men and women who did just that—to combat poverty, slavery, and other such evils. Thank God they did. But if we are taking the life and example of Jesus and his disciples seriously, some caveats to political action are in order. Here's one for starters—the most important one of all.

Christians who are truly following Jesus and living wholeheartedly for his kingdom will be in politics for one purpose only—to carry out the mission of King Jesus. We will talk more about this mission in subsequent pages, but this is a very important principle to establish here. It may not be wrong to love one's earthly country and hope for its success; the apostle Paul, for example, had a strong love for his people and nation, the Jews. But he also famously

called it all *skubalon* (“crap” or something close to it) compared to knowing Jesus.

So let’s talk straight here. My non-Christian friend, if you see a professing Christian getting to into America or any earthly kingdom, that could indicate a problem. This may sound troubling to some, but while patriotism and all that can be a nice thing, according to Jesus and his followers, love and concern for one’s earthly country should pale in comparison to love for Jesus and his kingdom—and more to the point, for others, including everyone in the world. Some Evangelical denominations at present are attempting to argue this point, claiming that since earthly governments should honor God in their policies, perhaps Christians should help governments do so by getting involved or even taking them over. But this is, frankly, *skubalon*. Everyone under heaven has an obligation to honor God, including leaders in government, but serious followers of Jesus are to be no more interested in occupying positions of political power than Jesus was. Once again, if political power can be utilized to advance the mission of Jesus, so be it. But never political power or national self-interest for its own sake. That’s not what Jesus was about. Jesus’s priorities were clear and simple: the kingdom of heaven and sinners. To the ends of the earth, until he returns.

Some earthly countries can appear to be friendly toward the gospel and have policies that seem to favor its success. Still, having too much affection and attachment to that country or such policies is, I would argue, dangerous to real Christianity. It’s not just that Jesus doesn’t need the help or blessing of earthly governments to advance his mission; it actually seems that in times of rapid Christian growth it

was God's will and pleasure to work in spite of, and in opposition to, earthly government power. This was true in the beginning of Christianity and at several key points in history. In fact, when Christianity has been favored or joined to earthly governments, the argument can be made that bad things invariably happen. Jesus doesn't need or want any earthly political power in the progress of his kingdom. He only needs his word, his Spirit, and obedient Christians to accomplish his purposes. He may have used certain governments at times to accomplish certain ends, but from the perspective of the New Testament, it was all in the service of the kingdom of Heaven—his kingdom. It may be difficult, but Christians must always keep their kingdoms straight.

So based on the life and teaching of Jesus and his apostles, being a Christian means being so loyal and dedicated to Christ, his kingdom, and his mission that earthly nations simply don't factor in to our thinking—at least for their own sake. Christians can use political means at times, but always, always, in our hearts and minds, the kingdom of heaven should have real priority. This means that everything Christians are doing should be to advance and hasten the fulfillment of the kingdom of Heaven. If they are not, my non-Christian friend—call them on it. Especially in our own country, in which a lack of patriotism is often considered a moral failure.

The next question is what this sort of activity—carrying out the mission of Jesus—really looks like. And here we have to get even more serious and straightforward—because Christians in our country today are, once again, *way off*.

Chapter 2

Coming soon