



Pastor's Page

“Death of a King”

I'm sure it will become another one of those “where were you when you heard the news” moments. Well for once I wasn't in my car listening to Radio 5 but somewhere much more exotic....no not the Stirchley Co-op but sitting on a terrace in a Greek Hotel overlooking a swimming pool! I was leading an early Morning Prayer meeting when a small group of people arrived after we'd started and apologised for being late. “No problem” I said, “it's a holiday” Following some prayer general conversation broke out and one young guest just casually mentioned the fact that Michael Jackson had died. My ears pricked up and I said to her “Do you mean the Michael Jackson?” She said “yes the singer, I've just heard it on the news”. When I went back to my room BBC world news confirmed the story (just for me!) The news for the rest of the week was dominated by this story and last week BBC2 covered the singer's memorial service. I was reluctant to watch it (never really a fan) and it seemed to me slightly voyeuristic. However I watched some of it!

I wasn't really taking too much notice of it until I heard the beautiful strains of a gospel choir singing the Andre Crouch song “Soon and very soon - we are going to see the King” As I watched I realised (because the commentator had mentioned it) that it was Andre Crouch himself performing it with his choir. It sounded tremendous. What happened next though unsettled me a little. The coffin containing the body of Michael Jackson was carried in by his brothers as some of the crowd applauded and cheered. That in itself seemed inappropriate to me but then I wondered if people were assuming that the words of the song “Soon and very soon - we are going to see the King” were referring to Jackson – the “King of Pop!” I really, really hope not because in the midst of this strange service, which was a mixture of religious sentiment, personal grief and showbiz schmaltz, this song offered the only hope for human beings in the face of death.

And obvious as it may be, let's not forget that Michael Jackson was a human being created by God (although slightly redesigned by the surgeon's knife!) and loved by God. And whilst we have no right to judge him it seems plain to me that he was a damaged human being. He may have had more money than most people can even imagine (he's the only person I know that owns parts of the moon!!) and more fame than most people would ever wish for, and more talent than many other performers possess. Yet in a conversation with his friend the illusionist Uri Geller he was once asked if he was lonely. Apparently he took about 10 seconds to answer before he said “Uri Geller, I am a very lonely man!” This very famous, very wealthy, very lonely man – the King of Pop - needs to know the King of Kings. Nothing that anyone said at his memorial service could make any difference to the life that had been lived – in the end all that mattered was his relationship to the King of Kings.

It is through the death of this King, Jesus, that we have hope. It is through the rising again of this King that we can have eternal life. And now, whilst we're alive we must decide either to accept or reject him. And for those who do accept him and his forgiveness we can truly sing “Soon and very soon - we are going to see the King”

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