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### THE STAND CHRISTIANITY

Professional Football Player, Jon Kitna, quarterback of the Cincinnati Bengals, was recently fined by the National Football League some \$5,000. The offense? Not a football foul, not swearing or profanity, not criticizing the coaches, officials or the NFL itself. Kitna was fined \$5,000 for wearing a baseball cap marked with a cross. A Jesus Cross.

The NFL piously announced that Kitna was fined because he violated an NFL rule which prohibited the wearing of apparel not approved by the NFL immediately after a game! The highly offensive cap was a red baseball cap which was marked with a white cross. Kitna, an avid reader of the Bible and a passionate Christian, was doing what for him came naturally. The cross and its meaning was very special to him at all times in his life, including immediately following a football game.

Kitna plans to appeal. It will be interesting to see how the higher-ups in the NFL finally decide. It seems to be the sign of the times, does it not? Anything spiritual is offensive to somebody. Yet Scripture tells us that the cross itself is an offense, all the more the reason said Jesus to take up that offensive cross and follow me. I suppose Kitna was doing just that.

The cross is offensive, the real cross from real Christianity. Perhaps that is why there is in America and the world today a watered-down version of Christianity which remains highly popular in a secular age. A recent study conducted by Scripps Howard News and Ohio University determined some interesting things about Christian beliefs. The study found that 75% of people believe absolutely that Jesus was a real person, a real historical figure. 25% were not sure, or did not believe Jesus ever lived.

But of those so-called believers, one out five or 20% do NOT believe that Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary, and that the so-called Virgin Birth was mythological, metaphorical, but not real. Only 60% say that they believe absolutely that Jesus was the product of a Virgin Birth, sired by the Holy Spirit. The watering-down goes on.

Only 63% said they believed absolutely that Jesus was crucified and physically rose from the dead. 37% did not, or did not know. Only 69% of those surveyed thought that Jesus was the Son of God, 31% did not, and 67% thought that Jesus was divine in some way, whatever that means, and 33% did not. How interesting that so many could think that Jesus was divine, but was not born of a Virgin and did not rise from the dead.

Reverend Al Mohler, President of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, in Louisville, Kentucky, believes that Americans are growing increasingly comfortable with a cafeteria-style spirituality. They pick and choose whatever doctrines and beliefs seem pleasing or important to them and ignore the rest. It matters not to all such persons whether any events regarding the life of Jesus are real or metaphoric and symbolic. So many so-called Christians refuse to be biblical literalists or absolutists. So many modern day Christians want to take the Bible seriously, but not literally. So many Americans seemingly want an easy Christianity, one they are comfortable with, with or without the teachings and mandates of the Bible as they see fit.

I suppose the literal crucifixion and resurrection can be deeply offensive or irrelevant to so many. That Cross and all that it means is very difficult if not impossible for so many to accept. But that Cross is the bottom line of Christianity. Without it, and all that it means, there really is no Christianity, at least nothing really different from or better than anything else. Jon Kitna believed in the Cross, literally and passionately. He got fined by secularists for his passionate and aggressive display of that Cross. I appreciate what he did, and more so In Whom he believes. The crucifixion for any Christian is the most important event in history. The literal Cross then was as offensive as it is to so many today. If you wear one, wear it proudly and passionately like Jon Kitna. No matter what watered-down Christians in America may think, those who really know and believe really know the meaning of that cross.