

## WHAT IF JESUS HAD NOT BEEN BORN?

It may be surprising to some to learn that no one knows the date of the birth of Jesus. Not even the month or the year is known certainly. When people first began to set aside a day upon which to celebrate his birth, several different dates were celebrated; some settled on March 20, some on April 18, some on May 20. Uniformity was not obtained until the 354 A.D. when the Roman bishop Liberius specified December 25.

All of that is not very important. But nothing else in the world could be as important as the fact that Jesus was born. Without his advent into the world, all of us, even today, would live in a world of gloom.

Did you ever stop to ask what it would be like in the world today if Jesus had not been born? If Jesus had not been born:

### DISCUSSION

#### I. THE 39 OLD TESTAMENT BOOKS WOULD NOT BE WORTHY OF RESPECT

- A. "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." -- Acts 10:43
- B. "And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." -- Revelation 19:10
- C. "Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." -- Luke 24:45-47
- D. Someone has counted and said there are 332 prophecies of the coming of Christ in the Old Testament. It has been calculated that the mathematical probability that all those predictions would accidentally settle on one man is one in 84 times 10<sup>96</sup>.
- E. "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." -- II Peter 1:19-21 (McCord's translation says in verse 19, "We have the altogether reliable message.")
- F. If just one prophecy had proven false, then the Old Testament books would not have been worthy of our respect, for that would have proved God is not their author.

#### II. THE WORLD WOULD BE WITHOUT THE GREATEST EXAMPLE OF GOD'S ATTITUDE TOWARD MOTHERHOOD

- A. God could have sent Jesus into the world a full-grown man.
- B. Instead: "But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law." -- Galatians 4:4
- C. God knew the importance of motherhood. He wanted his Son to be born of a woman.
- D. No greater work that women can do than bear and rear children in the way of truth.
  - 1. "Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety." -- I Timothy 2:15
  - 2. "I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully." -- I Timothy 5:14
- E. Since the Creator chose to honor motherhood, all human beings should do no less.

### **III. THE WORLD WOULD BE WITHOUT THE GREATEST EXAMPLE OF GOD'S LOVE FOR POOR PEOPLE**

A. Could have had his Son born in a royal palace.

1. But he was born in a stable. Brother Hugo McCord, an expert in the Greek language, says it was a cave which contained a stable.

2. Luke 2:6-7 says, "And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn." His first bed was a feeding trough for donkeys and cattle.

B. Perhaps Jesus thought of this when he later said, "Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God" (Luke 6:20).

C. This fact should serve as a reminder to us that material wealth is not important. Remember our Lord's statement in Luke 12:15: "Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."

### **IV. THE WORLD WOULD NOT HAVE SEEN THE GREATEST EXAMPLE OF BAPTISM IN WATER**

A. "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John" (John 1:6). "John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins (Mark 1:4).

1. Jesus, however, was sinless, and so he did not need John's baptism "for the remission of sins." But he knew any Jews not submitting to John's baptism "rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him" (Luke 7:30).

2. Jesus always did the things that pleased the Father, and he certainly was not going to be classed with those who "rejected the counsel of God against themselves." He walked about 70 miles from Nazareth to the place in Jordan where John was baptizing (about four days of walking).

B. John knew who he was, and was shocked that he would come to be baptized. "But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" (Matthew 3:14).

1. "And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him" (Verse 15).

2. Righteousness is doing God's commandments. Psalms 119:172 says, "My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments are righteousness."

C. Jesus was the only accountable person to live on earth since the days of John the Baptist who did not need to be baptized in order to have his sins forgiven. But thousands are being taught today that baptism is not needed in order for them to be forgiven.

### **V. THE WORLD WOULD HAVE BEEN DEPRIVED OF THE GREATEST TEACHER OF ALL TIME**

A. He gave the ideal standard for human conduct, the Golden Rule.

1. Many great teachers preceded him: Socrates, Plato, Confucius, Moses. But none had set forth the Golden Rule.

2. The Jewish teacher Hillel had taught: "What you do not like to have done to you, do not to your fellows." But that is only the negative aspect.

3. Confucius had also come up short, though what he said was good: "Do not treat others the way you do not want them to treat you."

4. But it remained for Jesus to announce the ideal way to live: "And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise" (Luke 6:31).

5. Someone has said, "Confucius would not pull up a neighbor's roses, but Jesus would plant roses for a neighbor."

B. Another reason he is the greatest teacher is that he pointed his listeners to the highest loyalty.

1. For example, Matthew 12:46-50: "While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him. Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."
  2. Blood-kinship was not allowed to dominate. More important than that is the relationship we sustain toward God, our Heavenly Father.
  3. Question: We know Jesus did not have any earthly possessions. But suppose for the moment he had possessed a large estate, and had written a will to dispose of it. Do you suppose the bulk of that estate would have been left to his brothers who did not believe on him, so they might use it in any way they wished? Or would he have left it to those who would use it to promote the cause for which he died?
- C. He was the greatest teacher in the use of object lessons. Matthew 18:1-4: "At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven."
- D. Even though he was the world's greatest teacher, his students did not always let his instruction take hold. Instead they allowed selfishness, vanity, and jealousy to possess them.
1. Being a patient teacher, he tried again to change their hearts, when he said in Matthew 20:25-28: "But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."
  2. It was not until later, but his apostles finally understood and applied this teaching of their Master.
- E. From what college did Jesus receive his degree?
1. His hometown people knew him, and said, "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him" (Mark 6:3). And they were shocked to see him teaching in the synagogue at Nazareth.
  2. Luke 4:22 says, "And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?" Carpentry requires skill and some knowledge, but that kind of skill and knowledge does not make one the kind of teacher Jesus was.
  3. "And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works?" (Matthew 13:54).
  4. Isaiah had prophesied: "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD."

## **VI. THE WORLD WOULD HAVE MISSED KNOWING ABOUT THE ONE AND ONLY SINLESS HUMAN BEING**

- A. Hebrews 7:26 says, "For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from

sinner, and made higher than the heavens."

B.The world's greatest teacher practiced what he taught. "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth" (I Peter 2:22). He was tempted, but did not yield to the temptation. "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15).

C.Some of his contemporaries said he was a good man; others accused him of deception. John 7:12 says, "And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him: for some said, He is a good man: others said, Nay; but he deceiveth the people."

1.Jesus claimed to be the Son of God. When he was on trial, the high priest said to him, "I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven" (Matthew 26:63-64). If he is not the Son of God, then he is a deceiver, and is not good.

2.Augustine wrote: "If Christ is not God, he is not good."

3.Some during the lifetime of Christ said he was beside himself (Mark 3:21). Others said he had a devil (John 10:20). If these things are true, then an insane, demon-possessed man has done more good for the world than all the sane people who have ever lived.

4.These accusations leave us with three options:

- a.Jesus of Nazareth was insane, or
- b.he was the world's greatest hoax, or
- c.he was the Son of God.

5.C. S. Lewis put it this way: Jesus was either a "lunatic or a liar or Lord."

6.Napoleon Bonaparte chose the third option, saying: "I know men, and I tell you that Jesus Christ is not a man . . . . Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and myself founded empires. But upon what did we rest the creations of our genius? Upon force. Jesus Christ alone founded his empire upon love; and, at this hour, millions would die for him."

## **VII.NO ONE COULD CLAIM SALVATION FROM THE GUILT OF SIN**

A.Hebrews 10:4: "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins."

B.Hebrews 9:22: "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission."

C.Ephesians 1:7: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."

D.First John 2:2: "And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

E.Brother Gus Nichols used to say that if Jesus had not shed his blood for us, "we would sit down and cry, and cry forever." Because there would be no way for us to have salvation from the guilt of sin.

## **VIII.NO ONE COULD LOOK FORWARD TO A RESURRECTION FROM THE GRAVE**

A.Hebrews 2:14 tells us that the devil had the power of death. He would still have it, if Jesus had not been born.

B.This whole verse says: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." This says Jesus took upon himself flesh and blood in order that he might die, and in dying, destroy the devil, "that had [past tense] the power of death."

C.The next verse says, "And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

D.By virtue of the birth, death, and resurrection of Christ, we do not have to live in hopeless gloom. Life is

not a dead-end street.

E. First Corinthians 15:21-22: "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

F. Jesus said in John 14:19, "Because I live, ye shall live also."

G. That is why Paul wrote in First Thessalonians 4:14, "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him."

H. If Jesus had not been born, then it would be the case that when you and I pressed our dying pillow and whispered goodby to our loved ones, it would be "Goodby, Goodby forever!" Or when we walked with broken heart across the cemetery behind the casket of the dearest on earth to us, we would do so in utter despair and hopelessness.

I. But because Jesus was born, and lived, and died, and was raised from the dead, we can say as we draw near the close of this earthly life, "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (II Timothy 4:6-8).

### CONCLUSION

No wonder the apostle wrote in Second Corinthians 9:15, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift." Brother McCord, in his translation of the New Testament, puts it: "Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift." Just think how different things would be if Jesus had not been born.

But there are some of you here today to whom the birth of Jesus really means nothing, so far as things that really matter are concerned. You are still "without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" (Ephesians 2:12). If you fall into that category, don't you think it's time to submit to the will of him who died so you might live?