

## WHAT IF JESUS HAD NOT BEEN BORN? Page 1 of 5

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.

While the date of Jesus birth is not very important, 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 would live in a world of gloom. For the next few minutes I want us to consider what it would be if Jesus had not been born?

**1. OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY WOULD NOT BE FULFILLED.** In the final few hours of Jesus' life, Jesus spoke of the upcoming events centered around his arrest/death said *Matthew 26:56* ***But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled.***

Peter reminded the audience about prophecy as there was a need to replace the position vacated by Judas. *Acts 1:16* ***Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus.***

These passages are just a sample of many that links Old Testament prophecy to Jesus. Had Jesus not been born these and many others passages would have no meaning. Someone has counted and said there are 332 prophecies of the coming of Christ in the Old Testament. 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.

**2. THE WORLD WOULD BE WITHOUT THE GREATEST EXAMPLE OF GOD'S ATTITUDE TOWARD MOTHERHOOD.** God could have sent Jesus into the world a full-grown man, but instead "*when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.*" *Galatians 4:4* God knew the importance of motherhood. He wanted his Son to be born of a woman. No greater work that women can do than bear and rear children in the way of truth. *"I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully."* *1 Timothy 5:14*. Since the Creator chose to honor motherhood, all human beings should do no less.

**3. THE WORLD WOULD BE WITHOUT THE GREATEST EXAMPLE OF GOD'S LOVE FOR POOR PEOPLE.** God the Father could have had his Son born in a royal palace, but he didn't. The Son of God was born in a stable. Brother Hugo McCord, an expert in the Greek language, says it

was a cave which contained a stable. *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.

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

**4. THE WORLD WOULD NOT HAVE THE GREATEST EXAMPLE OF BAPTISM IN WATER.** "*There was a man sent from God, whose name was John*" (*John 1:6*). Of this man John Mark would say "*John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins*" (*Mark 1:4*). 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*). Jesus 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). John knew who he was, and was shocked that he would come to be baptized. Matthew 3:14-15 "*But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? (15) 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.*" The passage tells us that Jesus was baptized to fulfill all righteousness. Righteousness is doing God's commandments. Psalms 119:172 says, "*My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments are righteousness.*" Jesus was the only accountable person to live 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.

**5. THE WORLD WOULD HAVE BEEN DEPRIVED OF THE GREATEST TEACHER OF ALL TIME.** He gave the ideal standard for human conduct, the Golden Rule. Many great teachers preceded him: Socrates, Plato, Confucius, Moses. But none had set forth the Golden Rule. Years before the birth of Jesus, the Jewish teacher Hillel and the Chinese philosopher Confucius each had thoughts on behavior toward fellowman, but both came up short in comparison to Jesus. Jesus announced the ideal way to live: "*And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise*" (*Luke 6:31*). He was at time called Rabbi which meant teacher. One such time was when he

visiting with Nicodemus. *John 3:1-2 There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: (2) The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.*

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. His selected apostles didn't always get what he was teaching, but being a patient teacher, 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."* It was not until later that his apostles finally understood and applied this teaching of their Master.

His hometown people did not understand him. They 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. 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 did not make one the kind of teacher Jesus was. *"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).

**6. THE WORLD WOULD HAVE MISSED KNOWING ABOUT THE ONE AND ONLY SINLESS HUMAN BEING.** *Hebrews 7:26 "For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens."* You see, the world's greatest teacher practiced what he taught. *"Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth"* (1 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). Some of his contemporaries said he was a good man; others accused him of deception. (John 7:12) *"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."*

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).* Fourth century Christian theologian Augustine wrote: *"If Christ is not God, he is not good."* 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.

These accusations leave us with three options: (1) Jesus of Nazareth was insane, or (2) he was the world's greatest hoax, or (3) he was the Son of God. British theologian C. S. Lewis put it this way: Jesus was either a *"lunatic or a liar or Lord."* 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."*

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

- *Hebrews 9:22: "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission."*
- *Hebrews 10:4: "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins."*
- *Ephesians 1:7: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."*
- *1 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."*

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."* The reason for such tears is because there would be no way for us to have salvation from the guilt of sin. If Jesus had never been born, then this blessing would have never been available.

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

Hebrews 2:14 tells us that the devil had the power of death and he would still have it, if Jesus had not been born. *"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 passage tells us that Jesus took upon himself flesh and blood in order that he might die, and in dying, destroy the devil. Notice that the devil *"had [past tense] the power of death."*

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

If Jesus had not been born, then it would be when you and I pressed our dying pillow and whispered goodbye to our loved ones, then it would be "Goodbye forever!" Or when we walked with a broken heart across the cemetery behind the casket of the dearest on earth to us, we would do so in utter despair and hopelessness. 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***" (2 Timothy 4:6-8).

No wonder the apostle wrote in 2 Corinthians 9:15, "***Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.***" Just think how differently things would be had Jesus not been born. But there are some today who live as though the birth of Jesus really means nothing. By choice, they are as Paul described the Gentiles; "***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?

Invitation