

## What If Jesus Had Never Been Born

Text : **Luke 2: 1-17**

### **INTRODUCTION :**

**A. We live in an era when many in Western society are in rebellion against God.**

1. Satan never stops his opposition to God and to God's plan.
2. People of faith who practice Christianity are ridiculed.

**B. Atheists are trying to push all practices of Christianity out of the public's view.**

1. Christian symbols are being outlawed in public. (*Jewelry, even grave markers.*)
2. Attempts are underway to forbid all public expressions of faith. (*Prayer*)

**C. They are attempting to prevent the public observance of Christian holidays.**

1. Easter activities are not allowed in school.
2. The war on Christmas has been going on for years.
  - a. Even trying to prevent people from saying Merry Christmas in public.  
*If the store won't say Merry Christmas, I don't shop there during Christmas.*
  - b. Preventing nativity scenes on public property.
  - c. Disallowing Caroling, Christmas plays and Christmas parties.

**D. What would this world be like if Jesus had not been born ?**

1. We understand that without Christ man would have NO hope of eternal salvation.
2. However, the birth of Jesus the Christ also had a great affect on all of mankind.

**The thesis of this lesson is, "The birth of Jesus was the second most significant event on earth since the creation." ( The resurrection is most imp. )**

**A. Everyone's life has an impact on everyone else's life. ( *intersecting ripples* )**

1. Plot of classic "**It's A Wonderful Life.**" (*Jimmy Steward's character*)
2. Though many seek to deny it, the influence of Jesus has reached most of the people on the planet. (*Often indirectly*)
3. The influence of Jesus affects the lives of many who have never even heard His name spoken.

**B. Time constrains so we will only address a few of those effects.**

## I. Time itself is marked by the life of Jesus, especially in the Western world.

- A. BC = Before Christ & AD = anno domini, i.e., "the year of our Lord."
- B. The unbelieving world is trying to change that to "*The Common Era.*"

## II. Jesus changed the value placed on human life.

- A. Human sacrifices were common before Christ.
  - 1. Babies would be sacrificed to idols. ( e.g., *Molech* ... **Lev. 18: 21** )
  - 2. Mayans cut hearts out of people and then ate them.
- B. Christians pressed until blood sports were eliminated.
  - 1. First, women were stopped from being gladiators.
  - 2. Then, fighting of gladiators was stopped altogether.
- C. Godless regimes kill millions. ( **Stalin** , **Mao** , **Pol Pot** , etc. )

## III. The teachings of Jesus led to the abolition of slavery.

- A. Jesus taught love for all men, not just your relatives or countrymen.
 

Note : Within itself ... slavery is not inherently sinful. ( *Existed from 1<sup>st</sup> history* )

  - The Old Testament regulates it rather than forbidding it. ( *God is consistent.* )
  - Kidnapping a man to enslave him was a capital offense. ( **Exod. 21:16** )
- B. When Jesus walked the earth fully half the world's population was slaves.
  - 1. Those captured in war were enslaved. ( *Forced labor from prisoners of war* )
  - 2. Those who could not pay debts or committed certain crimes were enslaved.
- C. Though Jesus didn't teach rebellion against slavery, Christians have resisted the concept as unloving and unjust.
  - 1. **I Cor. 7: 22-24** " ... each one is to remain with God in that *condition in which he was called.*"
  - 2. Early Christians would buy slaves in the market just to free them.
- D. Christians lead the abolition movement. ( *Preacher.. Wm Wilderforce in England* )
  - 1. John Newton led successful abolition movement in England. ( *wrote Amazing Grace* )
  - 2. In 1835 two thirds of the American Abolition Society was Christian preachers.

#### IV. The followers of Jesus raised the status of women.

- A. Before Christ, Women were generally viewed as property. (*father / husband*)
- B. Female infants were often killed. (*Many are still killed in China.*)
- C. They had no rights in marriage even when abused.
  - 1. Women were cloistered while men had mistresses.
  - 2. Women were often beaten or even executed by their husbands. (*Muslims today*)
- D. Widows were maltreated in many societies.
  - 1. Greco-Roman law required they remarry within 2 years. (*Husband took property*)
  - 2. Before missionaries, widows in India were burned with body of their husband.

#### V. Through His followers, Jesus improved the lot of children. (Matt. 19: 14, 18:3ff)

- A. When Jesus was born children had no rights and were commonly victimized.
  - 1. The father could have them killed at birth or later as discipline.
  - 2. The father could sell them as property.
    - a. Children were often used to pay debts. (*slavery, prostitution, etc.*)
    - b. Remember how Lot offered his daughters. (*Gen. 19:8 ; cf. – Judges 19: 24ff*)
- B. Before Christianity the Romans practiced infanticide.
  - 1. They glorified the killing of their own infants. (*eliminate defects or unwanted*)
  - 2. Christians would rescue and raise the Roman children that were discarded.
  - 3. This is the root from which orphanages originated.
    - \* *As many as 3/4 of children in godless Chinese orphanages die of malnutrition.*
- C. The “pro-life” (*anti-abortion*) movement is primarily a Christian endeavor.
  - 1. It can be traced back to the late first century in a writing called “*Didache*.”
  - 2. Until today, churches still lead the fight against abortion in America.

#### VI. Christ has changed the world’s view of compassion and mercy.

- A. Chinese proverb, “*The tears of strangers are but water.*” describes worldview.
- B. Before Christ, it was common for people and nations to capitalize on the sufferings and the misfortune of others.
  - 1. If you had a disaster, armies would come to conquer, not to help.

2. When a family fell into hard times, the rich would enslave them.
3. Remember the famine in Egypt during the time of Joseph. ( **Gen. 47** )  
*Pharaoh ended up owning everything including the land and even the people.*

**C. The teaching of Christ emphasized caring for the needy and the afflicted.**

1. The parable of the “Good Samaritan” is an example.
2. The life of Jesus demonstrated a different way of viewing people.
  - a. Healing the sick.
  - b. Feeding the hungry.
  - c. The primary focus of His ministry was to the poor.

**D. The doctrine Christ inspired requires that His followers help other people.**

1. Sharing is the very reason the Christian is commanded to work. ( **Eph. 4: 28** )
2. Christians are required to share their substance with the needy. ( **I John 3: 17** )
3. Unlike those outside Christ, Christians have always been taught to meet needs.  
**Titus 3: 14- Our people must also learn to engage in good deeds to meet pressing needs, so that they will not be unfruitful.**

\* **Public Hospitals are an outgrowth of Christian charity.**

**VII. Public education exists because Jesus lived.**

**A. In all of early history education was limited to those who could afford to pay.**

1. The poor were thought to be best left ignorant.  
\* *Third world landowners seek to keep surfs ignorant so they work on the land.*
2. It was against the law to teach slaves how to read. ( *Easier to control the ignorant* )
3. Even today it is illegal to educate women in the Muslim world.

**B. Public Education is a product of the protestant reformation movement.**

1. Martin Luther advocated converting monasteries to schools.  
\* *When Rome fell, it was monasteries that preserved written knowledge.*
2. Other reformation leaders followed suit so people could read the bible.
  - a. Education of the masses affected the entire flow of history.
  - b. Reformers educated the brightest students for leadership in various areas.
3. Many languages were put into writing for the first time by missionaries. ( *Wycliffe* )

**C. Public Education in America was begun so people could read the bible.**

1. In 1642 the Massachusetts Puritans passed a law requiring all children to be taught “*the principles of religion and the capital laws of the commonwealth.*”

2. In 1647 the Puritans passed the “Old Deluder Satan Act.”
  - a. They believed that only in studying scripture could one resist the works of Satan.
  - b. All towns of 50 or more people were required to hire and pay a fulltime teacher.
3. All but one of the first 123 colleges in the U.S. were started by churches.
  - a. Including such as : [Harvard](#), [Yale](#), [Columbia](#), [Brown](#), and [Dartmouth](#).
  - b. The founding principle of Harvard was :
 

*“Let every student be plainly instructed, and earnestly pressed to consider well, the main end of his life and studies is, to know God and Jesus Christ which is eternal life ...”*

## VIII. Time fails us to consider many other aspects of the Christian influence.

### A. Government

1. Many early world leaders were educated by churches so they had Christian values.
2. The founding documents of the U.S.A. are replete with biblical references.
  - a. 50 of the 55 founding fathers were practicing members of churches.
  - b. They said our republic would ONLY work if the population was Christian.

### B. Increased moral values

1. Christianity has raised the moral standard every place it has ever gone.
2. Compare cultures which have been influenced by Christianity with all others.

### C. Work ethic and free enterprise. (*As you sow, so shall you reap.*)

1. Christianity advocates :
  - a. If you won't work, others should not feed you, but help the disabled. **II Thes. 3:10**
  - b. All work is done to the glory of God. **Col. 3: 22-25**
2. Those with the Christian work ethic prosper.
3. Communism or socialism has never worked.

### D. Music and art

1. Many of the classical masters did their best work to glory of God.
  - a. Handel, Vivaldi, Bache, etc.
  - b. Religious hymns and songs that have remained for centuries.
2. Some of the greatest art in history has been created to glorify God / Christ.
 

( Last Supper, Ceilings of Cathedrals, etc. )

## IX. The greatest affect that Jesus has had on the world is relationship with God.

- A. Jesus revealed Jehovah God to all mankind. ( John 14: 8-14 , 6: 35-40 )**
1. Before Christ, God was viewed as the God of the Jews ... closed off from Gentiles.
  2. The justice and demands of the righteous God had been emphasized.
  3. Jesus showed man that God is loving and merciful. (*He is what He always was.*)
- B. Jesus gave hope to oppressed people everywhere.**
1. God will judge their oppressors.
  2. Sickness and affliction will one day be ended.
  3. There is a better life beyond this earth. (*Jesus was resurrected and so will we be.*)
- C. Man need no longer fear what will be next. (defeated animism)**
1. Jesus gave man the opportunity to be free from the “Law of Sin and Death.”
  2. **Rom. 8: 1-2** Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. <sup>2</sup> For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.

## CONCLUSION :

- A. Indeed, whether one is religious or not, the Christmas holiday season celebrates the most significant birth in the history of the world.**
- B. This is a worthy holiday from any perspective.**
1. No one knows for sure when Jesus was born, **but** we know He lived, died, rose.
  2. We know that no individual has had such a profound impact on the world.
- C. As Jesus brought out the best in mankind, so also this holiday season does likewise.**
- D. If you will invite Jesus into your heart, He will bring out the best in you.**

## INVITATION :

1. Place all your faith and trust in Him alone.
2. Commit your heart to forsake sin and live for Him.
3. Publically proclaim your faith that He is the Christ the risen Son of God.
5. Solemnize your commitment by being buried with Him in baptism.
6. Arise to walk a new life as God’s child and the younger brother of Jesus.

**Lesson Text :****Luke 2: 1-17**

**1** Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth. **2** This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. **3** And everyone was on his way to register for the census, each to his own city. **4** Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, **5** in order to register along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was with child. **6** While they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth. **7** And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

**8** In the same region there were *some* shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. **9** And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. **10** But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; **11** for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. **12** "This *will be* a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." **13** And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, **14** "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased."

**15** When the angels had gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds *began* saying to one another, "Let us go straight to Bethlehem then, and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us." **16** So they came in a hurry and found their way to Mary and Joseph, and the baby as He lay in the manger. **17** When they had seen this, they made known the statement which had been told them about this Child.