

***John 15:22 (NKJV) "If I had not come..."***  
**The Wonderful Name of Jesus**

What if Jesus had not come? What if there was no Christ in Christmas because He had not come at all?

Each week this month we will talk about a world without Christmas, examining how changing or removing the Christ would affect our personal lives and the world in general. Our theme song for the month focuses on the beauty of His name, the wonder of His name and the power of His name. Last week, we talked about the beautiful name of Jesus and the fact that He is the beauty in all that is beautiful. This week let's consider removing the Wonder of Christ, specifically the wonder of His birth.

**First, there is the wonder of HIS BIRTH.**

***Isaiah 9:6 (NKJV) "For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."***

Any birth is a wonderful event, but the birth of Christ had been foretold by the prophets for centuries. To Abraham, God revealed the nation through which Christ would come. To Jacob, He revealed that Christ would be of the tribe of Judah. To Isaiah, God mentioned a family, the line of Jesse. To Micah, God whispered the name of the city. To Daniel, God revealed the time of His birth. The events leading up to the birth of Christ were like the gears of a fine watch that had to mesh together so that when the fullness of time has come, Jesus was born in Bethlehem. What a wonder!

But what if He had not come, then all those prophecies would have been just mere words and everything else that was said through those prophets by the Holy Spirit would now be thrown into question! The prophets of the Holy Bible would simply be lumped into a category with all the other fortune-tellers through the ages. And the only thing we would be celebrating at Xmas would be the coming of another winter. But He did come, and His birth fills not only Christmas, but every aspect of life with wonder! Just the wonder of prophecies fulfilled by His birth is amazing—the most accurate and historically proven event in history!

To see the wonder of His birth, all we have to do is read a couple of chapters of the Bible that most of us usually skip over. In the 'begots' in ***Matthew 1 and Luke 3***, we see the active participation of God in the lives of men, ensuring that Christ does indeed come and salvation made available. God uses unlikely circumstances and people to thwart the plans of our enemy, satan, to stop Christ from coming. There are stories of rape, incest, betrayal, dishonesty and deception in the story of this birth. There are characters from every walk of life and every people group—prostitutes and kings, gentiles and Jews, dark-skinned, light-skinned and olive-skinned. There were so many places in this story, so many opportunities for failure, yet through them all God's plan prevails. No detour, no failure, no sin could stop the wonder of this birth.

And after His birth, Jesus should have been killed when Herod issued a command to kill all the male children under the age of 2. Yet, He lived, escaping to Egypt, leaving everything behind and living as a stranger in foreign land. No matter what satan planned to destroy and stop the wonder of this birth, our mighty God was always at work to protect the plan and the wonder. And that wonder assures us that the same God is at work in our journey, actively working “*...to make all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.*” *Romans 8:28*

**Then there is the wonder of the way He was born.**

*Luke 2:6-7 (NLT) “And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born. She gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no lodging available for them.”*

Really, to understand what this means, you have to remember what heaven was like and what Jesus left to come to our world and live in human flesh. As our theme song says, “*You didn’t want Heaven without us, So Jesus you brought Heaven down. My sin was great, Your love was greater. What could separate us now?*”

Had men arranged His birth, it would have never been in a stable. But the wonder of the way He was born means that God touched the needs of humanity right where we are.

But instead of asking what if He had not come, let’s ask this: What if He had not come in the manner He did? What if He had come as nobility, born in a palace? How would that change Christmas and how would that change His impact on our lives?

If Jesus had been born in a palace He would have been kept away from the world. Guards would have prevented ordinary men from coming to see Him. Only the rich and connected people would have had a chance to worship Him. There would have been no shepherds allowed in, regardless of their wild stories about angel choirs in the skies above their fields.

Had He been born in a palace we could not sing, “*What could separate us now?*” because He would have been separated from us from the very first breath. Instead the way He was born serves to announce His availability. Anyone could access the manger. There was no guard, not even a front desk manager to slow anyone down. You just walked right in to see the one of whom the angel Gabriel said, “*He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David. And he will reign forever; his Kingdom will never end!*” (*Luke 1:32-33*)

Jesus was available to anyone throughout His life here on earth, from His birth celebrated with shepherds, honored by kings and wise men from around the world, to His death on the cross, sharing Calvary with two criminals and buried in the grave of a rich man. The wonder of the way He was born announced the wonder of His reign as Christ and Lord—He is available to all, the weak and the strong, the rich and the poor, the well-connected and the disconnected, those considered the lowest by

society and those considered the best of society. He is indeed the Savior of the world and His Kingdom will never end! And that is wonderful!

**Without the wonder of His birth, we would not know the wonder of HIS RESURRECTION.** Pilate gave the order to seal the grave. *"Go, make the tomb as secure as you know how."* (**Matthew 27:65**). The most powerful nation on earth at that time, the Roman Empire, with all the resources and manpower needed to accomplish this, carried out Pilate's order. Yet the tomb is empty and Christ ever lives.

What if His tomb was still occupied by His decaying body?

The Apostle Paul describes what life would be like if that wonder had not happened:

***1 Corinthians 15:13-22 (JBP) "And if Christ was not raised then neither our preaching nor your faith has any meaning at all. Further it would mean that we are lying in our witness for God...and if Christ did not rise your faith is futile and your sins have never been forgiven. Moreover those who have died believing in Christ are utterly dead and gone. Truly, if our hope in Christ were limited to this life only we should, of all mankind be the most to be pitied!***

***But Christianity rests on a fact--the glorious and wonderful fact is that Christ did rise from the dead!...As death entered the world through a man, so has rising from the dead come to us through a man!"***

Jesus, the only begotten Son of the Most High God, did come. He did leave Heaven and come for us. He did live fully human and fully divine. He did take all my sin to the cross. He died my death and was buried in my grave, on my behalf. He did come, and He destroyed the power of sin, death and the grave for all of us!

**Without the wonder of His Birth we would miss the greatest wonder of Christmas: the wonder of HIS SAVING POWER.** *" And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."* **Matthew 1:21.**

This is the great wonder of Christmas: through His blood we find forgiveness, and through His death, burial and resurrection we find salvation.

Listen to this description from **Ephesians 2:7-9 (VOICE)** *"God did this for a reason: so that for all eternity we will stand--in wonder--as a living testimony to the incredible riches of His grace and kindness that He freely gives to us by uniting us with Jesus the Christ. For it's by God's grace that you have been saved. You receive it through faith. It was not our plan or our effort. It is God's gift, pure and simple. You didn't earn it, not one of us did, so don't go around bragging that you must have done something amazing."*

No wonder we call Him Savior! What a wonderful name it is—the name of Jesus!