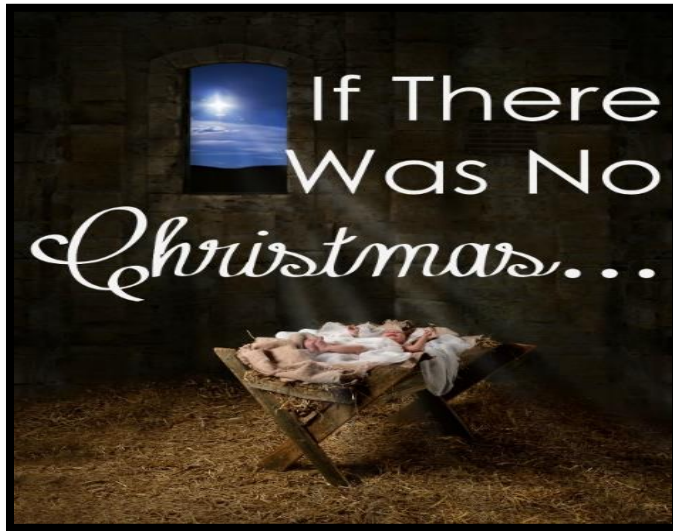


What if there was no Christmas?

Matthew 1:18-25

Online Sermon: http://www.mckeesfamily.com/?page_id=3567

Government officials all over the world have been discussing the possibility of severely limiting gatherings at Christmas time. This scares many people for we have many traditions we like to follow this time of year. For instance, how will it feel like Christmas this year without



large family gatherings, hugs, and kisses from loved ones and all you can eat buffets of turkey, ham, potatoes, dressings, and deserts? While even the severest of restrictions cannot cancel out Christmas entirely it got me thinking ... what if Jesus never fulfilled His role as Messiah some 2000 years ago and Christmas did not exist? What if Jesus refused to be made in human likeness, a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and a servant of all (Philippians 2:1-12)? What if Jesus gave into the temptation in the desert and chose to worship Satan rather than obey God? What if Jesus had refused to take the cup of God's

will in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36-45) or chose to respond to the taunts and called upon twelve legions of angels to take Him off the cross and destroy His enemies (Matthew 26:53; Luke 23:39)? If any of these events happened how would our sins be atoned for and to whom would be the way, truth, and life? Without the Messiah Christmas simply would not exist! Lets briefly look at five major things that humanity would lose if Christmas never happened.

If Christmas Never Happened ...

First without the Son coming to earth humanity would never have gotten to experience the miracles of the New Testament! Without Christmas the twelve apostles would have remained ordinary, Saul would have been known as nothing more than an exceptional Pharisee (Galatians 1:14), the paralytic would not have gotten up off his mat (Matthew 9:1-8), the demon possessed man in the region of Gerasenes would have been doomed to roam amongst the tombs and cut himself or the rest of his life (Mark 5:1-20), the man born blind would never have seen the beauty of creation (John 9:1-12), the ten lepers would never have been cleansed and allowed to return to their families (Luke 17:11-19), the 38 year invalid would have spent the rest of his life merely looking at the pool of Bethesda (John 5:1-15), and Lazarus and Jairus' Daughter would not have been raised from the dead (John 11:38-44; Mark 5:21-43)!



Also, without the true stories of Jesus walking on water (Matthew 14:22-33), commanding the seas to be calm (Matthew 8:23-27), casting out demons (Luke 5:1-20), and the feeding of the four and five thousand (Mark 8:1-13, 6:30-44) would we not be poorer for not having first-hand experience of His supremacy not over just our bodies, but all things seen and unseen (Colossians 1:16)? And above would not our hope be substantially less if Jesus never became fully human along with being fully God (Matthew 1:18-25)? Without a human nature

Jesus would not have been our Sympathetic high priest who was tempted in every way that we are, and yet not only did He not sin (Hebrews 4:15-16) but also sent God's Spirit to live inside of us so that sin would lose its power over us (Romans 6:1-6)? Yes, without the miracles of Christmas we would not have near the hope we have today!

Second, if Christ had not come to earth, He would not have sent His Comforter to live inside of His own! Imagine for a moment what it would be like to live in a fallen world of persecution, injustice, and insufferable tribulations without our Comforter! Without receiving the Holy Spirit, we would still have our stone hearts and as such find it near impossible to know

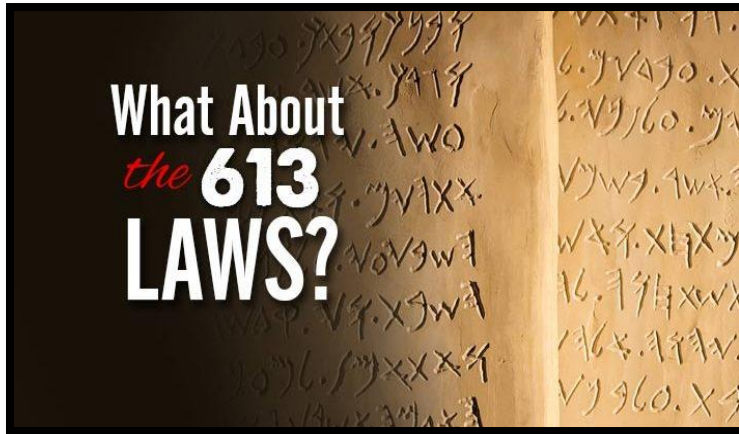


the truth much less become righteous in God's sight (Ezekiel 36:26). Without receiving the Spirit who would teach and guide us towards staying on the narrow path (John 14:26; 16:13)? Without receiving the Spirit how much more difficult would it be to convince the world of God's existence and love without One to convict them of their sin (John 16:7-8)? Without receiving the Spirit would it be possible to overcome the desires of the flesh of hatred, jealousy, sexual immorality, and selfish ambitions to embrace a life of love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:16-26)? Without receiving the Spirit how would we truly know that we are going to heaven (Romans 8:16-17) and how could we do God's work without having received the gifting to do so (1 Corinthians 12)? And without receiving the Spirit who would intercede in our weakness to make the words of our prayers go beyond the

superficial to become a sweet aroma unto our God (Romans 8:26-30)? Yes, if there was no Christmas, we would be quite depressed for without receiving the Spirit our struggle to know and please a holy God would be near impossible!

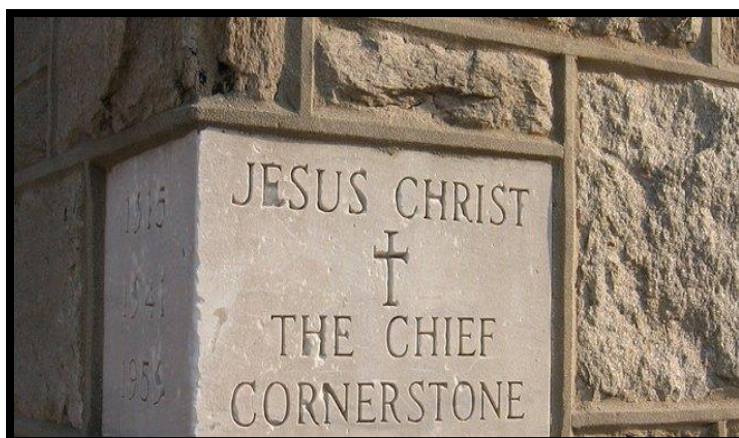
Third, if Christ had not come no one would have atoned for our sins and we would still be under the Law! Even though there are more commands in the New (1,050) than in the Old Testament (613), this does not mean that if Christ had not come our ability to please God would have been easier! Imagine how difficult it would be to learn and obey 613 commands without the aid of the Holy Spirit to guide us into truth and empower us to be holy as God is holy (1



Peter 1:16)! The Law is perfect in helping a person identify what is sin but was weakened by our sinful nature (Romans 7:13, 8:3). Each of us sins often and each time we do it drives a wedge between us and God for what does light have to do with darkness? In the New Testament the remedy for sin is through the Son's once and for all sacrifice on the cross and through our confessions (Romans 6:10; 1 John

1:5-10). In the Old Testament forgiveness of sins was only granted by the shedding of the blood of pure animals at an acceptable location, method and done by a priest (Hebrews 9:22). When we think about all the times that we have sinned we must confess that there are not enough bullocks, goats, lambs, doves, and pigeons to cover how far we have fallen short of the glory of God! If Christ had not come, we would be far more distant from our God because our sins would forever be before us!

Fourth, if the "chief cornerstone" (Ephesians 2:19-22) had not come to give His life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:45), the church would not exist! This does not mean that God's people would not be able to gather as an "Ekklesia" but merely that worship would be radically



different without the Incarnate Son. For example, what would this time of year be like without Christmas carols? How much poorer would worship time be without the Song Mary did you know that your baby boy would walk on water and save our sons and daughters? Would this time of year be the same without singing of the everlasting Light in O Little Town of Bethlehem or the

call to come to Bethlehem and adore the King of angels? What would the Little Drummer Boy play had Christ not come and what message would we Go and Tell on the Mountain? Without the Silent and Holy Night, we still would have plenty of reasons to fall on our knees and hear the angel's voices, but it would not be filled with the same hope that our Savior brings us on the blessed morn! Also, without the Holy Spirit gifting and empowering us to use wisdom from above how much more difficult would it be to gather and build one another up in the faith when everyone around us is still under the power of sin? Without the chief cornerstone and subsequent church our hope of being righteous in God's sight would be greatly diminished!

And finally, if the Messiah had not come, I cannot help but think that our society would be worse off even amongst those who see the cross as mere foolishness (1 Corinthians 1:18). Even though we live in fallen world that hates the Light this does not mean that our cups of cold water offered in love do not have a profound affect on society. One of the reasons why the



early church grew so quickly in the book of Acts was in their overwhelming generosity to look after the poor, widows, and orphans they exemplified and pointed to the love of Father in Heaven (James 1:27). In modern times who could ever forget how Mother Theresa helped the poor of India and who could forget all the cups of cold water that Christian charities such as World Vision, Salvation Army, Samaritan's Purse and Compassion International have offered to the poor of this world! Also, if the Messiah had not come would not our society be less kind

towards the rights of all especially considering the foundation of many of society's laws came from the Bible. And were not many of the first universities and hospitals started by Christians? While it is true that there have been many nonbeliever-philanthropists their deeds pale in comparison for without the Holy Spirit their cups of cold-water point to temporary fixes to physical problems whereas a believer's cups of cold-water point to the mercy of Christ who can heal their souls for an eternity. If the Messiah had not come, then yes, I do believe society would be worse off than we are today!

The True Christmas Message

Praise be to God that our discussion on the five major things we would loose if Christmas had not happened is merely hypothetical! The truth by which we are set free (John 8:31-33) from the fear of Christmas being cancelled has been alleviated by the Babe lying in a manger some 2,000 years ago. Yes, Christ chose to empty Himself of the glory He had in heaven (Philippians 2:7) and be born a virgin with a human and divine nature (Matthew 1:18-

25). We are to celebrate the truth that the shepherds visited the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes (Luke 2:8-20) and several years later the wise came and gave their King gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh (Matthew 2:1-12). Let us not forget that like us Christ grew up in a fallen world of persecution, injustice, and insufferable tribulations but unlike us He never



sinned and as such has forever become our Sympathetic High Priest (2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:14-26). Jesus healed the blind, multiplied the fish and loaves, casted out demons, healed the lepers and invalids, raised the dead and calmed the storms, for He is truly the Son of God. Above all this Christmas let us celebrate that the sinless, Lamb of God Jesus chose to obey the Father and atone for our sins upon the cross because He dearly loves everyone, His own and His enemies (John 10:18; Romans 5:10)! And yes, let us with great joy celebrate the

glorious truth that God raised Jesus from the dead and now Jesus sits victorious at the right hand of His Father (Romans 8:11; Ephesians 1:20-22). So, when this holy and silent night comes this year let us celebrate the truth that we have been purchased at the price of Christ's very life so that we might have life and have it abundantly (2 Corinthians 6:19-20; John 10:10)!

Let me finish with the concern that I started with ... yes there is a possibility that there will be an outbreak of infected people in the next two weeks and the government will respond by severely limiting gatherings at Christmas time. While this will threaten our tradition of



family coming together and sharing hugs, kisses and large buffets of turkey, ham, potatoes, dressings, and deserts; it cannot and must not change our tradition of remembering and shouting from the mountaintops of our hearts the truth of the babe lying in the manger that came to save the world from their sins (Matthew 1:21). Regardless of the restrictions placed on us due to the Coronavirus we will on Jesus' birthday bow our knees to our Lord, Savior and King! And even if we are but one or two in our households this year, we will still offer cups of cold water by sending out to

the widows, poor, suppressed and those going through crushing tribulations gifts of money, food and telephone calls of love and support. And because this world is dying in their sins we will not

cower in our homes even if the government puts restrictions on us but instead as His ambassadors and royal priests (2 Corinthians 5:20; 1 Peter 2:9) we will get on our knees in our bedrooms, kitchens, and family rooms and send out our prayers that Christ will open their eyes that they might see, their minds that they might understand, and their hearts so that they might embrace the truth this Christmas that they too can become as we are: redeemed masterpieces of God's grace forever adopted into His family as His own (John 3:16)! Christmas is almost upon us and regardless of possibly losing some very precious traditions we will never stop telling a dying world of the only vaccine that can truly save their very souls: the Babe lying in a manger who came to take away their sins!