

Calvary, not Bethlehem

It happened almost 2,000 years ago, but the residual effect is still with us today. Every time we partake of the Lord's supper we are reminded of that moment in history when the sins of mankind were laid upon the back of our Savior, when the Son of God bled and suffered on Calvary that you and I might live.

For some reason, though, men have a desire to celebrate the birth of Christ rather than His death. We decorate our houses with glittering lights, wrap our presents in pretty paper, and sing holiday songs for approximately twenty-eight days. Then we go on our merry way wishing each other a Happy New Year until the next "black Friday" when the latest gadgets and electronic marvels hit the shelves of Best Buy and Walmart.

While the birth of Jesus is most certainly a significant historical event, it was not God's wish that we celebrate the birth of Jesus once a year, but that we remember His death once a week. Every time we break the bread and drink the cup we are reminded of Calvary! The late Johnny Ramsey so eloquently captured the idea:

On a hill far away that old rugged Cross beckons lost mankind to a nobler pursuit of life. Out of the depths of despair and ruin untold comes a clarion call from heaven that provides salvation for wayfaring men estranged from God to come back home to the Father who runs to meet the prodigals once enveloped in the pigpen of iniquity. The compelling love of the One who died for all (2 Corinthians 5:14) draws us to a richer, fuller, and purpose-filled life that responds to the suffering Savior in obedience, gratitude, and loyalty (The Words of Truth, April 25, 1997).

The real impact of Christianity is not found in a manger one cold December morning. In fact, evidence suggests that our Lord was born in the early to mid-spring rather than the dead of winter. The heralding angels, the shepherds, and the wise men all played a part in ushering the Lord and Savior into this world. We cannot, yea would not, diminish the importance of that moment when Mary gave birth to the incarnate Son of God. Without His birth there would have been no life; and without His sinless life there would have been no value in His death beyond that of ordinary mortal men.

However, it is not His birth but His death that provides hope. It is His death that unleashed the power of heaven to save men from their sins. It is Calvary, not Bethlehem, to which the eyes of lost humanity must turn for hope. It is Calvary, not Bethlehem, where Jesus paid the price for the sins of humanity. It is Calvary, not Bethlehem, where Jesus fulfilled God's law, satisfied divine wrath, and opened the fountain of life from whence has poured forth the cleansing blood of our Lord for twenty centuries.

Yes, all this happened at Calvary, not Bethlehem!

- Tom Wacaster, *Glad Tidings (House to House Heart to Heart)*, Jacksonville, AL

"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the word." - Galatians 6:14

Life is like a coin. You can spend it any way you wish - but you can only spend it once.

News & Notes

BAPTISM: Zach Thompson. Encourage this young brother as he begins his Christian journey.

ZIP CODE CHANGE: Araya White, c/o Autumn Morteo, 6862 S. Hood Ct., Unit 2, Wasilla, AK 99623.

NEW CONVERT CLASS: Each Sunday a.m. Bible Class in Room 406. This class is for those who were baptized in the last three years.

CARE & SHARE BEARS: Each Tuesday at 9:00 a.m. All the ladies are invited and urged to help in this good work.

MEN'S BIBLE STUDIES: Each Tuesday at 7:00 p.m., (for only one hour). All the men are asked to be present for this class.

1st ANNUAL NEW YEAR'S DAY BREAKFAST: Monday, Jan. 1, 9:00 a.m. at the Fellowship Bldg. FREE for all the congregation. Breakfast will be prepared and served by the men. Sign-up sheet on the desk in the foyer for food planning purposes. Make this a success by planning to join in this time of fellowship.

MAILING PARTY: Saturday, Jan. 6, 10:00 a.m. at the Fellowship Bldg. This a one piece card mailer promoting the Virginia Avenue & St. Clair Avenue Churches of Christ. Cards are to be sorted and bundled for Post Office routes.

PANTRY: Baked beans.

SICK & SHUT-IN: David Stefl, Mary Jane Bowers, Mary Helen Riley, Linda Wiersbicki, Fred Larrimore, Blondenia Orr, Betty Henthorne, Doris Dunham, Tom Wells (ex-husband of Claudette Miller). **FOX NURSING HOME:** Mary Nelson. **CROSSROADS:** Sarah Miller, Jim Mick. **CALCUTTA HEALTH CARE:** Ella Beagle. **IN FLORIDA:** Ilene Rayl.

The Rest of the Story

We are wont to sing of shepherds
And the heavenly glory bright,
Of angels and their message
On that peaceful holy night.

But so oft we end the story
When 'tis only just begun,
For we fail to give the message
That this Child is God the Son.

Here to give Himself a ransom,
Crucified on Calvary's tree,
Through His blood providing pardon,
Perfect cleansing, full and free.

And the tomb, thank God, is empty;
Jesus sits at God's right hand
Now a loving, mighty Savior:
Spread the news to every land!

- L. W. Beckley -

JESUS CHRIST

*Laid in a manger
because there was no room
for Him in the inn.*

*Crucified on a cross
because there was no room
for Him in the hearts of men.*

The Truth

Know It - John 8:32

Love It - 2 Thessalonians 2:10

Believe It - 2 Thessalonians 2:12

Obey It - 1 Peter 1:22

Tell It - Ephesians 4:15

Help It - 3 John 8

- Harrisburg Church of Christ, Harrisburg, IL -
(Bulletin Gold)