

WHAT IF JESUS HAD NEVER BEEN BORN?



Luke 2:1-7 – Jesus Changed Civilization, Arts, And Politics

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1. Jesus was born into a cruel world.

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. Luke 2:1–5 (ESV)

And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. Luke 2:6–7 (ESV)

2. The birth of Jesus civilized the world.

A. Jewish Roots

The Bible is the greatest gift God gave to man. Apart from it, we would not know right from wrong. — Abraham Lincoln

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” Matthew 5:27–28 (ESV)

B. The World Before Jesus

You shall not give any of your children to offer them to Molech,... Leviticus 18:21 (ESV)

C. Jesus Came

D. Civilizing the Barbarians

E. The Vikings

F. Mary Slessor Of Calabar

3. The birth of Jesus changed the arts.

A. Art

i. Cathedrals

ii. Michelangelo

iii. Leonardo da Vinci

B. Literature

i. William Shakespeare

"I commend my soul into the hands of God my creator, hoping and assuredly believing through the only merits of Jesus Christ my Savior, to be made partaker of life everlasting; and my body to the earth, whereof it is made." — Shakespeare

ii. John Bunyan

iii. Charles Dickens

C. Music

i. Guido of Arezzo

ii. Johan Sebastian Bach

4. The birth of Jesus changed politics.

A. Abraham Lincoln

As I entered the room, near night, he was sitting near a window, intently reading the Bible. Approaching him I said: "I am glad to see you so profitably engaged." "Yes," said he, "I am profitably engaged." "Well," said I, "if you have recovered from your skepticism, I am sorry to say that I have not." Looking me earnestly in the face, and placing his hand upon my shoulder, he said: "You are wrong, Speed; take all of this book upon reason that you can and the balance on faith, and you will live and die a happier and better man." — Lincoln the Citizen, pg. 201-202.

Order for Sabbath Observance, November 15, 1862. The President, commander-in-chief of the army and navy, desires and enjoins the orderly observance of the Sabbath by the officers and men in the military and naval service. The importance for man and beast of the prescribed weekly rest, the sacred rights of Christian soldiers and sailors, a becoming deference to the best sentiment of a Christian people, and a due regard for the Divine will, demand that Sunday labor in the army and navy be reduced to the measure of strict necessity. . . . The first general order issued by the Father of his Country [Washington] after the Declaration of Independence indicates the spirit in which our institutions were founded and should ever be defended. "The general hopes and trusts that every officer and man will endeavor to live and act as becomes a Christian soldier, defending the dearest rights and liberties of his country. — Miller, ed., Life and Works of Abraham Lincoln, 6:204-205.

B. William Wilberforce

Applications

All the armies that ever marched, all the navies that ever sailed, all the parliaments that ever sat, all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man on this earth as much as that one solitary life. — James Francis

1. Jesus changed history,... and he changed it for the better!

A. The birth of Jesus civilized nations wherever the gospel message went. If it were not for the birth of Jesus, we might still be drinking from human skulls.

B. Jesus was the driving force behind the greatest art, literature, and music the world has seen.

C. Jesus was behind some of the greatest political work in history, such as the ending of slavery.

2. If Jesus changed history, he can change your story... He came to do a work far greater than improving society. He came to forgive our sins and restore our relationship with God.

Life Group Questions

1. **Read Luke 2:1-7.** Read Luke 2:1-7. What details about the birth of Jesus reveal how uncivilized the world was when Jesus was born?
2. **Review point 1.** How did the coming of Jesus change the way we treat people? See Luke 6:35, Galatians 6:10, and Colossians 3:13. As our culture walks away from Christ, what can we expect will happen with how people are treated?
3. **Review point 2.** What did you find fascinating about the uncivilized nature of the world before the coming of Jesus? What general kindnesses in American culture do you think come from Jesus and the church?
4. **Review point 3.** Pastor Kurt pointed out a few great artists who loved Jesus. How did Jesus change how a painter painted, an artist sculpted, or a musician did their work? What does that tell us about how Jesus should change the way we do our work?
5. **Review point 4.** We often hear the phrase "Separation of Church and State." That means the state shall not establish a national church. It doesn't mean that our love for Jesus should not influence the way we work. What can we learn from Lincoln and Wilberforce about how Jesus changed their political work?
6. When Wilberforce became a Christian, he was the only Christian in Parliament. When he left Parliament 45 years later, there were over 100 Christians. This was a big piece of what led to the ending of slavery in England. After reflecting on what we learned about the lives of Lincoln and Wilberforce, what do you think should be a Christian's role in politics?