

**Grace Bible Church
The Tree of Life
A Weekly Review
Week ending 122610**

Christmas Special: The life of the one who would change the world.

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him.

(Joh 3:16-17)

On this Christmas Eve, in the year of our Lord 2010, believe it or not, this Christmas Eve has a lot in common with the first Christmas when our Lord was born into the world. On the very first Christmas Eve, earth was unaware as to what was happening around them. Unaware, inattentive, oblivious, and unobservant!

The earliest reference to Christmas being celebrated on December comes from the second century after the birth of Jesus.

It is considered likely the first Christmas celebrations were in reaction to the Roman Saturnalia, a harvest festival that marked the winter return of the sun-and honored Saturn, the god of sowing. Saturnalia was a rowdy time, much opposed by the more austere leaders among the still-minority Christian sect.

Christmas developed as a means of replacing worship of the sun with worship of the Son. By 529 A.D., after Christianity had become the official state religion of the Roman Empire, Emperor Justinian made Christmas a civic holiday. However, the world, back then, was absorbed with that which was not important. They were engrossed in their own lives and preoccupied with vanity and emptiness. However, Heaven wasn't!

The innumerable Holy and Elect angels were waiting in anticipation. They were waiting to break forth in praise and worship and adoration to the birth of a new born child, the Son of God. A birth that meant that God had fulfilled His word and sent forth His child for salvation. A fulfillment of Isa 9:6, **For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us;** and on that first Christmas Eve there was also a farewell going on in heaven, the Son said goodbye to the Father. In fact, a part of that conversation is recorded for us in the tenth chapter of Hebrews.

On that first Christmas Eve, the Lord is speaking to the Father and this is what He said:

Therefore, when He comes into the world [this is the first Christmas], He says, "Sacrifice and offering Thou hast not desired, But a [human] body Thou hast prepared for Me;" (Heb 10:5)

Note that the physical body of the humanity of Christ was prepared for Him beforehand by God the Father.

"In whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast taken no pleasure. Then I said, 'Behold, I have come (In the roll of the book it is written of Me) To do Thy will, O God.'" (Heb 10:6-7)

He said in effect, Father I realize that You have not been satisfied with the blood of animals and therefore you have prepared a body for me so that I could be the ultimate sacrifice. Therefore, the Lord Jesus Christ bid farewell to His Father and began a journey that was to end 33 years later on the Cross.

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich. (2Co 8:9)

The physical body of Christ was divinely prepared by God the Father and God the Holy Spirit as the vehicle to bring God to mankind and to be the perfect sacrifice for sin. In addition, while this was going on, earth was oblivious to it! People on earth had no idea that for the first time ever, God was going to become a man. God was coming in the flesh, Heaven was well aware of the event, earth was not.

There are so many things about Christmas that the majority of people today know nothing about. The Holy Spirit had taken ninth months to fashion inside of Mary, a physical body which would be perfectly prepared for our Lord. A human body that would be like no other human body because it was the only human body to be born into this world without a sin nature. A body that was to be inhabited by the second person of the Trinity.

The fullness of time had come when God would send forth His very own Son. Gal 4:4 teaches this, **But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman**, and every Christmas time we stop and rather mindlessly acknowledge the birth of Christ. Some say He was God, others say He was just a man. The real issue is not that He came, the issue is why He came.

Many people stop and think about Christmas just as the fact that He came...but they never bother to find out why He came. Why did He come? Why was He born? To present God?...YES. To teach truth?...YES. To fulfill the Law?...YES. To reveal love?...YES.

These are all secondary reasons why He came. There is really only one primary reason. One primary plan. One primary person. And that is that Jesus Christ, who came into the world on that first Christmas for one major reason...to suffer and to die for you.

“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”
(Mar 10:45)

who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony borne at the proper time. (1Ti 2:6)

Joh 1:1 says, **In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.**

And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. (Joh 1:14)

This evening I would like you to focus in on the life of the one who changed the world. It all began in eternity past where we read in Rev 13:8 He is called the **Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.**

“Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know--this {Man}, delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put {Him} to death.

(Act 2:22-23)

For truly in this city there were gathered together against Thy holy servant Jesus, whom Thou didst anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever Thy hand and Thy purpose predestined to occur. (Act 4:27-28)

The life of the one who changed the world was born in a little-known village, a child of a peasant woman,

“But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, {Too} little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity.” (Mic 5:2)

The life of the one who would change the world worked in a carpenter shop until He was thirty –

Luk 3:23, And when He began His ministry, Jesus Himself was about thirty years of age,

Mat 13:55, Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary, and His brothers, James and Joseph and Simon and Judas?

Then He became a traveling preacher, (Mar 1:35-39).

The one who would change the world never wrote a book. We know that because if He did we would be fighting about which book He wrote and who had the original. However, there is a book that was written about Him and the first Christmas that says in Heb 10:7, **“Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come (In the roll of the book it is written of Me) To do Thy will, O God.’”**

He never held an office; **Joh 18:36, Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world.”**

The one whose life would change the world never did one thing that usually accompanies greatness except perform miracles. Later He told individuals in **Mat 8:4, “See that you tell no one; but go, show yourself to the priest, and present the offering that Moses commanded, for a testimony to them.”**

He had no credentials but Himself; **Joh 14:11, “Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me; otherwise believe on account of the works themselves.”**

While still a young man, the life of the one who changed the world would have public opinion turn against Him.

And coming to His home town He {began} teaching them in their synagogue, so that they became astonished, and said, “Where {did} this man {get} this wisdom, and {these} miraculous powers?” Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary, and His brothers, James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then {did} this man {get} all these things?” And they took offense at Him. But Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his home town, and in his {own} household.” (Mat 13:54-57)

The life of the one who changed the world would be marked by His friends running away from Him in time of trouble; **Mar 14:27, And Jesus said to them, “You will all fall away, because it is written, ‘I will strike down the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.’”**

One close to Him would also deny Him, as well as all of His disciples; **Mat 26:33-35, But Peter answered and said to Him, “{Even} though all may fall away because of You, I will never fall away.” Jesus said to him, “Truly I say to you that this {very} night, before a cock crows, you shall deny Me three times.” Peter said to Him, “Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You.”**

In MAT 26:69-74, Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard, and a certain servant-girl came to him and said, “You too were with Jesus the Galilean.” But he denied {it} before them all, saying, “I do not know what you are talking about.” And when he had gone out to the gateway, another {servant-girl} saw him and said to those who were there, “This man was with Jesus of Nazareth.” And again he denied {it} with an oath, “I do not know the man.” And a little later the bystanders came up and said to Peter, “Surely you too are {one} of them; for the way you talk gives you away.” Then he began to curse and swear, “I do not know the man!” And immediately a cock crowed.

The one whose life would change the world went through the mockery of a trial, **Mat 20:18-19 “Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn Him to death, and will deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock and scourge and crucify {Him,} and on the third day He will be raised up.”**

The life of the one who changed the world ended up nailed to a cross between two thieves; **Mat 27:38, At that time two robbers were crucified with Him, one on the right and one on the left.**

His executioners gambled for His only piece of property-His coat; **Mar 15:24, And they crucified Him, and divided up His garments among themselves, casting lots for them, {to decide} what each should take.**

The life of the one who changed the world would have His body laid in a borrowed grave; **Joh 19:41, Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had yet been laid.**

Twenty centuries have come and gone, and today He is still the centerpiece of the human race.