



What Would Jesus have Said to YOU?

John 3:17: (NASB) For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through him.

It is the Christmas season. It is a time for happiness, giving, receiving and appreciating. There was a time not so very long ago when the main focus of the Christmas season was the birth of Jesus as the world's Savior. We are past that now, thanks to our political correctness, where Jesus is very much an afterthought of the holidays. Well, here today Jesus is NOT an afterthought. He is NOT a divisive figure who offends people by his mere existence. No, here today Jesus is recognized as the savior of humanity, the centerpiece of God's plan and the King of Kings. As we honor the birth and life of Jesus, we will do so by highlighting some personal conversations he had with various people he encountered throughout his three and one-half year ministry. In so doing we will tell a story that is rarely told.

Our first conversation is between Jesus and Nicodemus. **Let's lay the groundwork right before Nicodemus is introduced:** John 2:23-24: Many believed, but Jesus *did not entrust himself* to them. Why? Their belief was just at the beginning and would need the test of time. There was no maturity of belief yet. John 3:1-3: (KJV) *There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:* Nicodemus displayed faith - similar to those of the previous chapter - but Jesus *here* responds with truth. Why did he interact with Nicodemus but not the others? Jesus saw Nicodemus' faith as one that was *looking* for nourishment...and he fed it! Jesus spoke a deep and previously unheard teaching to Nicodemus, who had a hard time understanding it. **Jesus stayed with him and told him so much more! Here is a glimpse:** John 3:14-17: Jesus entrusted Nicodemus with these precious and important verses. Jesus could read the heart and saw that even though he was of the Jewish ruling class, Nicodemus had a heart for God and a heart for truth.

Jesus trusted and told an educated and sincere Jewish ruler of his personal mission and how this mission would be carried on by his followers. No one else knew this information!

Maybe you come from a strong religious background like Nicodemus. Would Jesus have spoken to you in the same way?

The birth of Jesus was a significant point in history, for it began the outward revealing of an eternal plan of hope that had up to this point been veiled. With Nicodemus in mind, let's look at the setting up of Jesus' birth and ask ourselves, "Am I the person Jesus would talk to and have faith in? Am I open to receive the blessings of the knowledge of the Gospel?"

God tested Abraham's faith and told him to sacrifice that promised child, Isaac. Abraham was willing, and God accepted that willingness as a sign of true and deep faith. **Here is what God said to Abraham:** Genesis 22:16-18: This is ancient hope, the hope of blessing, the hope of posterity and the hope of redemption through Abraham and his own family. When you have a plan of hope - especially a plan of eternal hope - and when that plan includes ALL of the human family, it not only takes time to develop, it also, by definition, requires complex logistical events to be put into place.

One of these amazing complexities was the preparation of the one who would be the seed of Abraham. This seed - this man - would need to be perfect as Adam was, yet born of a woman. He would need to be a man, to live the life that an ordinary man lives, yet be willing to sacrifice all of his own will and desire to fulfill the Law of Moses. He would need to be graced with the very power of God above, yet be a humble and obedient son who was willing to be rejected and die.

God, as the author of hope, let us again know through prophecy who would take on this great challenge: Isaiah 6:8-10: How do we know that this prophecy was about Jesus and not just a proclamation by the prophet Isaiah? We know because Jesus himself told us by quoting this prophecy when explaining why he taught in parables.

Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus was a conversation with an educated, wise and respected Jewish leader. Jesus saw his heart and showed him that true salvation had arrived and he would be a witness to it! Are we wise and educated in our own little corner of our world? Is Jesus able to show us those same kinds of transformational truths? Would we listen?



One of the truly magnificent things about Jesus was the level at which he lived his human life. As we shall see, he constantly looked beyond the traditions and opinions of men and always addressed people where they lived - their hearts. Our next conversation is pretty much the polar opposite of the last one.

Our second conversation is between Jesus and a woman from Samaria by a well. John 4:7-15: The mere fact of this conversation happening sets Jesus apart!

The woman thinks in practical terms, hearing Jesus offering a lifetime supply of physical water. Likely being about two miles from this well, this sounds great! Jesus proceeded to tell her details about her life and about truth, including her living in a sinful circumstance. This shocked her. John 4:23-26: The woman went back to the city, leaving her water pot behind, and shouted out that she had seen the Messiah. Many Samaritans came to seek him out because they believed her, and Jesus spent two days with them. Jesus could read the heart and saw humility in this woman whose life was messed up both in her personal morals and her spiritual associations. He saw through all this and touched her heart.

Jesus gave this sinful and out-of-favor woman a rare and exciting view of God's plan. He let her know her present circumstance did not have to equal her future opportunity.

Do you come from a similar, messed up situation? Are you an outcast? Have you made bad life decisions? Are you living sinfully? If your heart is right, Jesus can and will talk to you in spite of those things.

Please see [CQ Rewind Full Edition for the discussion about Mary and Joseph](#).

Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman was a conversation with a messed up-but-seeking individual. It was about living water and the coming of Messiah. Little did she know of the depth of faith and preparation that had to happen to make the Messiah's coming possible!

Are we at all like that messed up-but-seeking woman - wanting more but not knowing how to find it? Are we up for some of that living water? Can we appreciate the depth of the testing those surrounding Jesus' birth had to go through? This was something so big, so difficult and so taxing that they had to be of exactly the right kind of character, humble before God. Are we in line to appreciate the faith of Mary and of Joseph?

Our next stop on our journey through some of the personal conversations of Jesus brings us to another respected man, albeit he was an outsider. It is through this conversation that the true pattern of Jesus' conversations will begin to emerge. That pattern exemplifies his whole reason for presenting himself as the ransom for all.

Our third conversation is between Jesus and a centurion. This might be considered an odd conversation because, according to the Luke account, Jesus did not talk directly to the centurion but to his representatives instead.

The Matthew 8:5-13 account reports the centurion going himself. This shows us the absolute authority of a "mouthpiece" being sent as a representative.

Luke 7:1-10: The centurion was keenly aware of Jewish activities and had great trust with the elders. He sent those elders to meet Jesus to make a request on his behalf. Jesus treated his representatives as if he had been there himself.

The centurion's acknowledgement of his unworthiness is a clear view into his humble character. The centurion was a man who had and understood power and authority. He knew that Jesus' power was so much greater than his (shocking for a Roman soldier) and he was absolutely subservient to that greater power.

Jesus was willing to go heal the servant long distance! With just a word, it was done. This conversation between two men who wielded great power shows us the power of faith and character. Not one of the chosen people of Israel had displayed such bold faith and humility before Jesus.

Jesus hears and responds to the heart of this Roman centurion without ever seeing his face. Jesus uniquely blessed this outsider, as the soldier had a love for Israel and his only request was for the life of another.



Are you a modern-day centurion? Do you come from a place in the world of power, respect, authority, high in rank, perhaps? Disciplined? Successful? If you have the humility of heart, would you be able, willing and wanting to talk to Jesus?

Now we come to the birth of Jesus. We have already seen glimpses of all of the work done to prepare for this particular event. God's plan of hope began ages before this moment and He revealed pieces of it to us through the many prophecies of the Old Testament. God's preparations continued through the drafting of the right people of the right character to be the supporting cast for Jesus the Messiah and to surround this event.

We pause to meditate on the birth that would change everything: Luke 2:1-14: With all God went through to get ready for this moment, it is striking that Jesus would be born in such a common and humble way. There were no special provisions, no special exemptions, no special circumstances - they were required to do what everyone else did, travel where everyone else traveled and pay what everyone else paid...

To be born in a stable and to be laid in a manger among the animals was the most fitting of places for the Lord of men to enter the world. After all, Jesus would live these humble beginnings each and every day for 33½ years, for it was through this humility that he would be able to pay the ransom price. It was through this humility God's plan of redemption would flourish. This fulfillment of prophecy required an angelic announcement to the most humble audience of shepherds - fitting - the baby Jesus would grow to assume the throne of David, once a shepherd himself. Imagine the fear, the thrill and the hope instilled in those shepherds! In the still of the night, under the vast expanse of the starlit heavens comes this glowing message - full of light, full of prophecy fulfilled and full of expectation.

Jesus' conversation with the centurion aptly enhances the lessons of Jesus' birth. Just as Jesus came into this world with no human-generated fanfare, he also healed the servant of a foreigner with the subtlety of a word. Jesus was born to redeem the world and this centurion and his servant were not only included, they received a foretaste of the joy that redemption brings.

Jesus was a man, and while we often imagine him as an unending flow of energy and godly righteousness, he did get tired. He did need time away to think and pray. Jesus needed the safe haven in a peaceful place of caring friends. Such were Mary, Martha and Lazarus. They provided him a place to rest.

While there are not a lot of conversations recorded between Jesus and his friends Mary, Martha and Lazarus, the sensitive caring between them became evident when Lazarus became sick. Mary and Martha sent word to Jesus about his illness, which means they knew where he was. Jesus comes to them, but only *after* his dear friend Lazarus died.

He spoke with Martha and Mary: John 11:17-44: Martha, the busy, active sister, displayed great faith. *I have believed that you are the Christ* - Martha nails down the purpose of Jesus and reaffirms her faith in him. She has been given peace in the tragedy of her brother's death. Mary was most comfortable sitting at the feet of Jesus. As she cries, he cries as well. He felt her pain and joined in with her pain. Martha was more logical and needed to be helped one way; Mary needed to be comforted this way. **Now Jesus talks to Lazarus - just three dramatic words - "Let him go:"** Jesus called him forth from the dead. *Unbind him and let him go* - this is the symbol of what resurrection will mean - mankind will be unbound by sin and death and will be able to truly live for the first time.

Jesus addressed Martha, Mary, the mourners and Lazarus. In each and every case, he fulfilled exactly what they needed by his words, prayer or actions - he showed them hope for life! This is how Jesus treated those who were special to him.

Are you a faithful and trusted friend? Are you comfortable to be around? Jesus has a special place for you.

Please see CQ Rewind Full Edition for the discussion about the shepherds at Jesus' birth.

We immediately learn of Mary Magdalene's devotion in this first description of her: Luke 8:1-3: Contrary to MANY writings that falsely speak of Mary Magdalene as a former prostitute, she was a very respectable woman. She was healed by Jesus, she helped him during



his ministry, she was there at the cross, she was there to prepare for his burial and she was there at the tomb.

She was one of those disciples who seemed to always show up: John 20:1-18 Mary had been with the other women up to this point. Once the disciples left, she alone lingered at the tomb and would be blessed as a result with another angelic appearance. She was overwrought with the fear that someone was disrespecting the body of Jesus. Her heart was so troubled that Jesus, the risen Lord himself, would see fit to calm her. She would be the first human being to see him after his resurrection.

Jesus spoke to the broken-hearted Mary with words of deep compassion and understanding. He also spoke to her with his gentle managing of her touch.

Do you come from a background of a Mary Magdalene, previously wounded, having lost stature and standing, having been renewed and healed, thankful and determined for others to be given what you have been given? As Jesus brought Mary Magdalene from a point of being healed in spirit to going about her Lord's business by going to encourage his brethren, we see Jesus' whole purpose was about giving and then teaching those to whom he gave how to give as well. This is what his kingdom will be all about.

Perspective - here is the eternal reason for the season! Daniel 2:44. Perspective - there was an issue of justice that needed satisfying - Jesus came to satisfy it! 1 Timothy 2:5-6.

Perspective - the result of Jesus satisfying justice is a pathway to perfection for all...and heaven for his followers. The people will be healed and perfected: Isaiah 35:5-10: The land will be healed and perfected. The process by which people live will be healed and perfected.

So, what did you get for Christmas? Hopefully you have received - and are giving - *the real story about the real birth of the real savior and the real hope he stands for*. Hopefully we can more clearly see how Jesus spent time with real people who had real issues, and who were in many cases outside of the realm of those who would be considered “ripe” for the Gospel.

Let's review those precious conversations with Jesus that we talked about:

- Jesus spoke to Nicodemus - a man who was a member of a class who sought Jesus' destruction and shared deep truths with him about the Gospel call... *Are you a Nicodemus?*
- Jesus spoke to the Samaritan woman - one who was shunned by the Jewish community, yet Jesus shared deep truths about his purpose and his identity... *Are you like that Samaritan woman?*
- Jesus spoke to a Centurion - a Roman soldier who at that time had no right to the Gospel, yet Jesus gave him the healing of the Gospel for his beloved servant... *Are you a modern-day Centurion?*
- Jesus spoke to Mary, Martha and Lazarus - these were his close friends and he encouraged their faith and built their hope and also gave them his most dramatic miracle.... *Are you a trusted, faithful friend?*
- Jesus spoke to Mary Magdalene - a woman who had been of broken spirit and possessed by demons. She was such a faithful and thankful follower that she had the historic privilege of being the first human being to see the risen Jesus and the first human being to be given the gospel work from the risen Jesus... *Are you a healed Mary Magdalene?*

Jesus talked to everyone! He shared truth with anyone with faith and love in their hearts! The five conversations presented here today are meant to inspire you to a greater appreciation of Jesus and his mission as the Son of God, coming to this earth to “pay a debt he did not owe, because we owed a debt we could not pay.” Be a person who will hear when Jesus speaks!

*So, what would Jesus have said to YOU?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Merry Christmas to you all!*