

### What Would Jesus Have Said to YOU?

<u>John 3:17</u>: (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:

<u>John 2:23-24</u>: (NASB) <sup>23</sup>Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in his name, observing his signs which he was doing. <sup>24</sup>But Jesus, on his part, was not entrusting himself to them, for he knew all men...

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) <sup>1</sup>There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:

(Source: Bible commentary by Albert Barnes) Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. One of the Sanhedrim, or great council of the nation. He is twice mentioned after this as being friendly to our Savior; in the first instance as advocating his cause, and defending him against the unjust suspicion of the Jews and in the second instance as one who came to aid in embalming his body.

<sup>2</sup>The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. <sup>3</sup>Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

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:

<u>John 3:14-17</u>: (NASB) <sup>14</sup>As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; <sup>15</sup>So that whoever believes will in him have eternal life. <sup>16</sup>For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whoever believes in him shall not



Conversation Conclusion

perish, but have eternal life. <sup>17</sup>For God did not send the son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through him.

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?"



• I've always wondered, if I'd been at the stable that night would I have seen a king or just a baby? If I'd stood there with the shepherds listening to stories about choirs of angels, would I have asked, What child is this? Or would I have known that he'd someday be the shepherd of all? If I had watched wise men bring valuable gifts and kneel down under the guard of heavenly wonders, would I have understood that he was the one and in whom I would find all wisdom? And that he was the greatest gift of all, just as that baby was held by his mother? He would hold me. He would hold me with his amazing grace, and his adoption by his father, Joseph, would be a picture of my adoption to God's family. Who could comprehend this baby who was defenseless, swaddled and held would someday be the one holding me in his hands?

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: (NASB) <sup>16</sup>...By Myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only son, <sup>17</sup>indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies. <sup>18</sup>In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.

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: (NIV) <sup>8</sup>Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send? And who will go for us? And I said, Here am I. Send me! <sup>9</sup>He said, Go and tell this people: Be ever hearing, but never understanding; be ever seeing, but never perceiving. <sup>10</sup>Make the heart of this people calloused; make their ears dull and close their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed.

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?



### Michelangelo Merisi known as Caravaggio (Milano 1571 – Porto Ercole 1610) Deposition

This work, realised between 1600 and 1604, was commissioned by Girolamo Vittrice for the family chapel in the church of Santa Maria in Vallicella (Chiesa Nuova) in Rome to honour the memory of his uncle, Pietro, who had died in 1600. An absolute masterpiece of Caravaggio's Roman period, the painting was requisitioned by the French in 1797 and taken to Paris, from whence it returned in 1817 and became part of the Vatican Picture Gallery. The work does not focus attention so much on the Deposition itself as on the moments immediately following in which, according to tradition, the body of Christ was laid on a marble slab (lapis untionis, anointing stone) to be washed, anointed and perfumed. The disciple, John, and Nicodemus (perhaps a portrait of Pietro Vittrice) are supporting the body of Christ, whilst the Virgin Mary can be recognised immediately behind, petrified with grief, Mary Magdalen weeping, and Mary of Cleophas who rends the darkness of the background with her gesture of despair.

"The Entombment,"
by Caravaggio,
Oil on canvas circa 1602–04
Pinacoteca Apostolic,
Vatican City



### Part two, What Child is This, Anthem Script, Skit Guys

• I didn't witness a star moving across the sky or scores of angels proclaiming his birth. But somehow in the middle of my ordinary world, this extraordinary baby's birth found a place in my worn-down, beat-up heart. So that all those people who saw it, he's the one I've been waiting for, to repair me, redeem me, love me, forgive me, comfort me, help me, die for me, raise me to life. So, what child is this? He's the one who comes to save me, he's the one who comes to save me, to save me. He's the one who comes to save me.

Jesus' previous conversation was with one who was deeply respected.

Is Jesus setting up a pattern?

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: (NASB) There came a woman of Samaria to draw water....

#### Who were the Samaritans?

(Source: Biblical commentary by John Trapp) Josephus writeth that at Samaria was a sanctuary opened by Sanballat for all renegade Jews, etc. The Jews therefore hated the presence, the fire, the fashion, the books of a Samaritan. Neither was there any hatred lost on the Samaritan's part; for if he had but touched a Jew, he would have thrown himself into the next water, clothes and all; both of them equally sick of *a noli me tangere* (do not touch me.) (Epiphanius.)

(Source: Biblical commentary by Jamieson, Fausset and Brown) It is this national antipathy that gives point to the parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37), and the thankfulness of the Samaritan leper (Luke 17:16,18).



"Christ and the Samaritan Woman at the well," by Angelica Kauffman, Oil on canvas circa 1796 Neue Pinakothek, Munich, Germany



John 4:7-15: (NASB) ...Jesus said to her, Give me a drink. \*For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. \*Therefore the Samaritan woman said to him, How is it that you, being a Jew, ask me for a drink since I am a Samaritan woman? .... \*10\*Jesus answered and said to her, If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, Give me a drink, you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.

### The mere fact of this conversation happening sets Jesus apart!

<sup>11</sup>She said to him, Sir, you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep; where then do you get that living water? <sup>12</sup>You are not greater than our father Jacob, are you, who gave us the well, and drank of it himself and his sons and his cattle? <sup>13</sup>Jesus answered and said to her, Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; <sup>14</sup>but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life. <sup>15</sup>The woman said to him, Sir, give me this water, so I will not be thirsty nor come all the way here to draw.

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: (NASB) <sup>23</sup>But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people, the Father seeks to be His worshipers. <sup>24</sup>God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth. <sup>25</sup>The woman said to him, I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ); when that one comes, he will declare all things to us. <sup>26</sup>Jesus said to her, I who speak to you am he.

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.



"It Came Upon a Midnight Clear," (part one) Celtic Woman

It came upon the midnight clear
That glorious song of old
From angels bending near the earth
To touch their harps of gold
Still through the cloven skies, they come
With peaceful wings unfurled
And still their heavenly music floats
O'er all the weary world
Peace on the earth, goodwill to men
From heaven's all-gracious King





### The world in solemn stillness lay To hear the angels sing

Just like the Samaritan woman, those who would be part of bringing this plan of God to fruition would be tested, for they would have to be of the most faithful sort.

### We will briefly focus on Mary and how her faith must have been so firmly grounded and true:

<u>Luke 1:26-38</u>: (NASB) <sup>26</sup>Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to... Nazareth, <sup>27</sup>to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup>And coming in, he said to her, Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you. <sup>29</sup>But she was very perplexed at this statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this was.

The angel Gabriel is now appearing for the second time, six months after Elizabeth conceived. Mary was young and only engaged. His greeting was one of great favor, yet Mary's reaction was confused and fearful.

### The angel continued:

<sup>30</sup>...Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup>And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. <sup>32</sup>He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David; <sup>33</sup>and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and his kingdom will have no end.

There was an obvious immediacy with all of this, for the angel could not be speaking of some future son of Joseph. The question that needed answering above all else had to be asked, because faith could perceive of these other things, but this one question could not be fathomed: How can this be, since I am a virgin?

#### Gabriel answered:

<sup>35</sup>...The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy child shall be called the Son of God. <sup>36</sup>And behold, even your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age; and she who was called barren is now in her sixth month. <sup>37</sup>For nothing will be impossible with God.

For Mary, Gabriel's last words must have rung true in the deepest recesses of her young heart - for nothing will be impossible with God.

<sup>38</sup>And Mary said, Behold, the bondslave of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word. And the angel departed from her.

### What about Joseph?

<u>Matthew 1:18</u>: (NASB) Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit.

For Joseph, this would have been a completely unexpected and horrifying dilemma. What should he do? He could have sent Mary away in public shame, but he was a righteous man and did not want to disgrace her, so he determined to send her away privately. This was an extraordinary and life-changing decision that had been laid before him, so he would sleep on it to be sure.

### As he slept, an angel of the Lord came to him in a dream:

<u>Matthew 1:20</u>: (NASB) ...Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.



Well, this certainly was an explanation in harmony with how Mary had tried to explain her dilemma!

### The angel continued:

<u>Matthew 1:21-23</u>: (NASB) <sup>21</sup>She will bear a son; and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins. <sup>22</sup>Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: <sup>23</sup>Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel, which translated means, God with us.

Joseph would have awakened with a start and with profound thoughtfulness. Mary's explanation was *not* some wild excuse; rather, it was a direct fulfillment of THE prophecy of THE Messiah! Mary, his espoused, was carrying the Savior of all, and he, Joseph, would have the opportunity and privilege to raise this Savior to manhood! Glory to God in the highest!

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?

"It Came Upon a Midnight Clear," (part one) Celtic Woman

It came upon the midnight clear
That glorious song of old
From angels bending near the earth
To touch their harps of gold
Peace on the earth, goodwill to men
From heaven's all-gracious King
The world in solemn stillness lay
To hear the angels sing
Peace on the earth, goodwill to men
Peace on the earth.
(Repeating)

From the wise and respected to a sinful woman of an outcast people.

Who does Jesus speak with next?

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

<u>Luke 7:1-10</u>: (NASB) <sup>1</sup>When he had completed all his discourse in the hearing of the people, he went to Capernaum. <sup>2</sup>And a centurion's slave, who was highly regarded by him, was sick and about to die. <sup>3</sup>When he heard about Jesus, he sent some Jewish elders asking him to come and save the life of his slave.



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.

## In our world today, we would march right up to Jesus ourselves. Why didn't he?

<sup>4</sup>When they came to Jesus, they earnestly implored him, saying, he is worthy for you to grant this to him; <sup>5</sup>for he loves our nation and it was he who built us our synagogue. <sup>6</sup>Now Jesus started on his way with them; and when he was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends, saying to him, Lord, do not trouble yourself further, for I am not worthy for you to come under my roof;

The centurion's acknowledgement of his unworthiness is a clear view into his humble character.

### But there is much more here:

<sup>7</sup>for this reason I did not even consider myself worthy to come to you, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed. <sup>8</sup>For I also am a man placed under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, Go! and he goes, and to another, Come! and he comes, and to my slave, Do this! and he does it.

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.

<sup>9</sup>Now when Jesus heard this, he marveled at him, and turned and said to the crowd that was following him, I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such great faith. (Matthew 8:13: And Jesus said to the centurion, Go; it shall be done for you as you have believed.) <sup>10</sup>When those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the slave in good health.

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?

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#### "The First Noel," (Part one) Pentatonix

Noel, Noel, Noel
The First Noel, the Angels did say
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep
On a cold winter's night that was so deep
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel
Born is the King of Israel!
Noel, Noel, Noel

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:

<u>Luke 2:1-14</u>: (KJV) <sup>1</sup>And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed... <sup>3</sup>And all went to be taxed, everyone into his own city. <sup>4</sup>And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem... <sup>5</sup>To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. <sup>6</sup>And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

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...

<sup>7</sup>And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn

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.





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### "The First Noel," (Part one) Pentatonix

They looked up and saw a star
Shining in the east beyond them far
And to the earth it gave great light
And so, it continued both day and night
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel
Noel, Noel, Noel
Noel, Noel, Noel
Born is the King of Israel!
Noel, Noel, Noel
Born is the King of Israel!
Born is the King of Israel!
Noel, Noel, Noel
Noel, Noel, Noel

<sup>8</sup>And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup>And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. <sup>10</sup>And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. <sup>11</sup>For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. <sup>12</sup>And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

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.

### And then it was full of music - the thundering chorus of heavenly angelic voices singing praise:

<sup>13</sup>And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, <sup>14</sup>Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

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"Glory to God from the Messiah," Mormon Tabernacle Choir

Glory to God, glory to God in the highest
And peace on earth
Glory to God, glory to God, glory to God in the highest
And peace on earth, goodwill towards men, towards men,
Goodwill towards men, towards men, goodwill towards men
Glory to God, glory to God in the highest
And peace on earth
Goodwill towards men, towards men
Goodwill, goodwill, goodwill towards men
Goodwill towards men!

Humility does not preclude heavenly celebration; rather, it provokes it. In this humble manner Jesus was born.

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.



## The purpose and power of Jesus' life is shining through! To whom did he go when he needed rest?

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.



"Christ in the House of Martha and Mary," by Johannes Vermeer, Oil on canvas circa 1655 Scottish National Gallery Edinburgh

This is the largest painting by Vermeer (63 inches by 56 inches)

(Source: Biblical commentary by William Barclay) It is one of the most precious things in the world to have a house and a home into which one can go at any time and find rest and understanding and peace and love. That was doubly true for Jesus, for he had no home of his own; he had nowhere to lay his head (Luke 9:58.) In the home at Bethany he had just such a place. There were three people who loved him and there he could find rest from the tension of life.

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.

### First, a conversation with Martha:

John 11:17-44: (selected verses) (NASB) <sup>17</sup>So when Jesus came, he found that he had already been in the tomb four days... <sup>20</sup>Martha therefore...went to meet him... <sup>21</sup>Martha then said... Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. <sup>22</sup>Even now I know that whatever you ask of God, God will give you. <sup>23</sup>Jesus said to her, your brother will rise again. <sup>24</sup>Martha said to him, I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.

Martha, the busy, active sister, displayed great faith.



<sup>25</sup>Jesus said...I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me will live even if he dies, <sup>26</sup>and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this? <sup>27</sup>She said to him, Yes, Lord; I have believed that you are the Christ, the Son of God, even he who comes into the world. <sup>28</sup>When she had said this, she went away and called Mary her sister...

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.

### Next, Jesus responds to Mary without words:

<sup>32</sup>Therefore, when Mary came where Jesus was, she saw him, and fell at his feet, saying to him, Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. <sup>33</sup>When Jesus...saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and was troubled, <sup>34</sup>and said, Where have you laid him? They said to him, Lord, come and see. <sup>35</sup>Jesus wept.

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 again talks to Martha and then he prays:

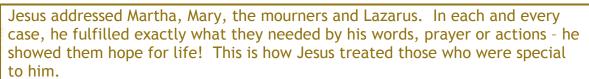
<sup>38</sup>So Jesus, again being deeply moved within, came to the tomb... <sup>39</sup>Jesus said, Remove the stone. Martha...said to him, Lord, by this time there will be a stench, for he has been dead four days. <sup>40</sup>Jesus said to her, Did I not say to you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God? <sup>41</sup>So they removed the stone. Then Jesus raised his eyes, and said, Father, I thank You that You have heard me. <sup>42</sup>I knew that You always hear me; but because of the people standing around I said it, so that they may believe that You sent me.

Jesus prayed out loud as a witness to the people around him.

### Now Jesus talks to Lazarus - just three dramatic words:

<sup>43</sup>When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. <sup>44</sup>The man who had died came forth, bound hand and foot with wrappings, and his face was wrapped around with a cloth. Jesus said to them, Unbind him, and 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.



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

Let's go back to the shepherds whose privilege it was to be told of Jesus' birth.



"Angels We Have Heard on High," (Part one) The Piano Guys Mormon Tabernacle Choir

Gloria, Gloria
Angels, from the realms of glory
Wing your flight o'er all the earth
Ye who sang creation's story
Now proclaim Messiah's birth
Gloria, Gloria
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Gloria, in excelsis Deo Gloria, in excelsis Deo Gloria, Gloria

<u>Luke 2:15-20</u>: (NASB) <sup>15</sup>When the angels had gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds began saying to one another, Let us go straight to Bethlehem then, and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us. <sup>16</sup>So they came in a hurry and found their way to Mary and Joseph and the baby as he lay in the manger.

These shepherds knew they were part of something much bigger than they ever conceived to be possible. They acted in faith right away and found Mary and Joseph. The baby lay quietly in a manger. Think of the tranquility and peace of the moment as they cast their eyes on their future Savior. This was Jesus, the one who would save the world!

<sup>17</sup>When they had seen this, they made known the statement which had been told them about this child. <sup>18</sup>And all who heard it wondered at the things which were told them by the shepherds.

They now took this miracle and published it among the people. These were just shepherds, but they were emboldened to speak out about the stunning event and the miraculous announcement they had been a part of. What a lesson for us - are we emboldened to speak out about the good news of Christ? We, also, have been invited to be a part of its message.

<sup>19</sup>But Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart. <sup>20</sup>The shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, just as had been told them.

For Mary, this was a time of awe-struck wonder. For the shepherds, it was a time of pure joy!

### For us, this is a time of unfettered praise and hope!

<u>Isaiah 9:6-7</u>: (NASB) <sup>6</sup>For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on his shoulders; and his name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

The big picture of Jesus' purpose here becomes very specific. Isaiah proclaims there will be one upon whom all world order will rest.

<sup>7</sup>There will be no end to the increase of his government or of peace...

No end of peace - Is that not the hope for life everyone is wishing for, waiting for and working for? Does that statement not fulfill the deepest hopes and dreams of humanity?

...on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.

This hope has a government, and the foundation of that government is justice and righteousness...God's justice and God's righteousness through the life and sacrifice of Jesus Christ.



### ַרָּוֹנָנָנוֹ נָלּנְלּוֹ נֵיּיָנִי וֹיִרְיּוֹיִרְיִיּיִנִי וֹיִייְנִי וֹיִינְיִי וֹיִינְיִי וְיִינְיִי וְיִיּי

### "Angels We Have Heard on High," (Part two) The Piano Guys Mormon Tabernacle Choir

Saints before the altar bending
Watching long in hope and fear
Suddenly the Lord, descending
In His temple shall appear
Though an infant now we view him
He shall fill his Father's throne
Gather all the nations to him
Every knee shall then bow down
Gloria, in excelsis Deo
Gloria, in excelsis Deo

We have come to our final conversation. Who was it with and why was it so important?

We have purposely avoided Jesus' conversations with the Apostles and the Pharisees, etc., as those conversations are well known and often quoted. For our last conversation, we will fast forward to the morning of Jesus' resurrection and highlight the few powerful words Jesus exchanged with Mary Magdalene.

### We immediately learn of Mary Magdalene's devotion in this first description of her:

<u>Luke 8:1-3</u>: (NASB) ¹Soon afterwards, he began going around from one city and village to another, proclaiming and preaching the kingdom of God. The twelve were with him, ²and also some women who had been healed of evil spirits and sicknesses: Mary who was called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, ³and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others who were contributing to their support out of their private means.

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: (selected verses) (NASB) ¹Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came early to the tomb, while it was still dark, and saw the stone already taken away from the tomb. ²So she ran and came to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved... ⁴The two were running together; and the other disciple ran ahead faster than Peter and came to the tomb first; ⁵and stooping and looking in, he saw the linen wrappings lying there; but he did not go in. ⁴And so Simon Peter also came, following him, and entered the tomb; and he saw the linen wrappings lying there, ¹and the face-cloth which had been on his head, not lying with the linen wrappings, but rolled up in a place by itself...

# 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:

<sup>10</sup>So the disciples went away again to their own homes. <sup>11</sup>But Mary was standing outside the tomb weeping; and so, as she wept, she stooped and looked into the tomb; <sup>12</sup> and she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had been lying. <sup>13</sup>And they said to her, Woman, why are you weeping? She said to them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.



Conversation

Conclusion

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:

<sup>14</sup>When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus. <sup>15</sup>Jesus said to her, Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking? Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away. <sup>16</sup>Jesus said to her, Mary! She turned and said to him in Hebrew, Rabboni! (which means, Teacher.) <sup>17</sup>Jesus said to her, Stop clinging to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brethren and say to them, I ascend to my Father and your Father, and my God and your God. <sup>18</sup>Mary Magdalene came, announcing to the disciples, I have seen the Lord, and that he had said these things to her.

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!

<u>Daniel 2:44</u>: (NASB) In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever.

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"Unto Us a Child is Born," Mormon Tabernacle Choir

For unto us a child is born
Unto us a son is given
and the government shall be upon his shoulder
and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor,
The Mighty God,
The Everlasting Father,
The Prince of Peace (repeats)

## Perspective - there was an issue of justice that needed satisfying - Jesus came to satisfy it!

<u>1 Timothy 2:5-6</u>: (NASB) <sup>5</sup>For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup>who gave himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time.

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:

<u>Isaiah 35:5-10</u>: (KJV) <sup>5</sup>Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. <sup>6</sup>Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing:

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### The land will be healed and perfected:

for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. <sup>7</sup>And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes.

### The process by which people live will be healed and perfected:

<sup>8</sup>And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. <sup>9</sup>No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there: <sup>10</sup>And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Has this Christmas meditation brought you closer to being one of those with whom Jesus would have talked?

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"O Come All Ye Faithful," (part one) Chris Tomlin

O come, all ye faithful Joyful and triumphant O come ve O come ve to Bethlehem Come and behold him Born the King of angels O come, let us adore him O come, let us adore him O come, let us adore him Christ, the Lord Sing, choirs of angels Sing in exultation Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above Glory to God Glory in the highest O come, let us adore him O come, let us adore him O come, let us adore him Christ, the Lord

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."

"O Come All Ye Faithful," (part two) Chris Tomlin

Christ the Lord You are the Lord Yeah Lord, we greet Thee Born this happy morning Jesus to Thee be all glory Word of the Father Now in flesh appearing O come, let us adore Him O come, let us adore Him O come, let us adore Him Christ the Lord You are the Lord You are the Lord You are the Lord, yeah (repeats) We'll praise Your name forever We'll praise Your name forever We'll praise Your name forever

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!





Join us next week on our January 2, 2018 podcast,
"What Would You Want
Your Grandchildren to Know?"