

## WHAT A DIFFERENCE A BABY MAKES

Luke 2:7, "And she gave birth to her first-born son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger, <sup>Because there was no place for them in the inn.</sup>"

Matt 1:21, "And she shall <sup>will</sup> bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus, <sup>for</sup> because He <sup>will</sup> save His people from <sup>their</sup> sins."

Lk 2:12, "...You will find a babe."

## INTRODUCTION:

What a difference a baby makes!

What a difference it made in the home of Pharoah's daughter, who, when bathing in the Nile, heard the cry of a young baby.

It meant the difference between freedom and slavery for the children of Abraham.

What a difference it made to Hannah and Elkānah when the little baby Samuel came into their home "as a living jewel dropped unstained from heaven."

What a difference it made to Abraham and Sarah, old enough to be Isaac's great grand parents, when their home was blessed with "a tight little bundle of wailing and flannel, perplexed with the newly found clothing of life."

## I. What a Difference a Baby Makes in Your Home.

A. Do you remember the first baby that came into your home? Two lives that were perhaps before that self-centered became suddenly centered upon another who was the product of love's consummation.

Sacrifice and inconvenience were cheerfully taken in their stride.

Your baby made all the difference to you and your household.

B. Truly a baby in a house is a well-spring of pleasure.

A great English poet said:

"Look!! how he laughs and stretches out his arms, and opens wide his blue eyes upon thine, To hail his father; while his little form Flutters as winged with joy. Talk not of pain! The childless cherubs will might envy thee The pleasures of a parent." (Byron)



C. Often the true value of a treasure is not properly assessed until it is lost.  
Hear the lament of William C. Bennett over the loss of the expected son:  
"Oh those little, those little blue shoes!  
Those shoes that no little feet use.  
Oh, the price were high  
That those shoes would buy,  
Those little blue unused shoes!"

D. Babies are mightier than battalions at overthrowing human hearts.  
"Trailing clouds of glory do they come."  
One of our missionary couples ~~recently~~ said that the birth of their baby ~~had~~ opened up doors to witnessing for Christ that they never before thought possible.

E. It is said that civilization hangs in the balance at the birth of every baby,  
for what he is and what he becomes,  
the world tomorrow will be.  
---whether he be a John Dillinger or John Milton,  
Stalin or Shakespeare,  
Caesar or Columbus,  
~~Tojo or Jefferson,~~  
Nero or Nelson.

As Longfellow said in "To A Child":  
"Here at the portal thou dost stand,  
and with thy little hand  
Thou openest the mysterious gate  
Into the future's undiscovered land."  
We look upon the sweet-innocent face and ask:  
"What is the little one thinking about?  
Very wonderful things, no doubt;  
Unwritten history!  
Unfathomed mystery!"

F. The poorest couples in the world are those who have not learned that "children are an heritage of the Lord, and the fruit of the womb is his reward."

## II. What a Difference the Baby of Bethlehem Makes in the World.

### A. Christ came as we came.

He passed through the entire experience of human life, starting from the cradle, right up to the ~~the~~ tomb.

All are alike at birth --- babes.

Think of the

### 1. Soft little hands of the Baby Jesus.

2. "What is it you would clasp and hold  
wandering outstretched with wilful touch?

O fingers small you know you hold so much?

The world's hopes, fears, longings, joys, and woes.

All yours to hold, O little hands!"

The hand that cannot feed or protect the one  
who wields it, holds nevertheless the destiny  
of the nations.

Think of the

### 2. Clear shining eyes of the Baby Jesus.

Beautiful, innocent, laughing eyes."

Eyes that would one day by their piercing stare  
strike remorse and repentance to a cowardly big  
fisherman in a cold courtyard, — these eyes  
now brought the tenderest sentiments of compassion  
to the shepherds gathered around his basinet of straw.  
Had one of those shepherds been Before this  
sophisticated and worldly wise;  
had he searched previously for God & found Him not,  
he could have found Him that night in that baby's eyes.

### 3. As we approach the manger of Bethlehem we hear an infant crying in the night.

What means this baby's low cry?

Is this unintelligible cooing the same voice that  
spoke the creative words

when

and the starry galaxies leaped into being?

Is this feeble cry from the same lips that ~~shall~~ in  
30 years command the forces of weather <sup>would</sup>

the legions of demons

and the tyranny of disease

to be subject to Him?

Yes, by all means, yes,

for this Holy Babe is not only the Son of Mary,  
but the eternal, omnipotent Son of God!



Moreover, this low cry is a reminder that only through a pathway of suffering is He to make His entrance into and His exit from our common human life. "What new born babe is this that in a manger cries? ~~Near on her bed of pain his happy mother lies.~~"

He is God's Suffering Servant, long ago prophesied by the eloquent Isaiah, and now by way of suffering, and amidst the deprivations of the poor, he is born. "Behold a helpless, tender Babe, In freezing winter night, In homely manger trembling lies; Alas! a piteous sight."

He later explained the mystery that should have been more obvious to those who were closest to Him:

"To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world." (Jn. 18:37)

"Do you stop to wonder

Why men never see

How very closely Bethlehem

Approaches Calvary?"

On that first Christmas Day, if we could have stood with Joseph and the shepherds looking into the Manger, I wonder what would have been our reaction if suddenly a Voice had said: "See these little chubby hands and feet? Very soon they will be spiked to a cross! Look at that little brow. Soon it will wear a crown of thorns! How soft are those little cheeks. They soon will be slapped and spit upon! ? See the baby's side? A spear will soon be thrust therein! Look how tender and delicate is the baby's body. Soon it will be bruised and beaten."

As one man we would have lifted up our hands and voices in consternation and said --

"NO! It couldn't happen to him."

But it did.

And what a difference it would make!

NOTES to sermon "What a Difference  
a Baby Makes"

II.B.

1. Before this baby was born, time was measured in each nation by the passing of dynasties, but after Christ in the Year of our Lord.
2. He makes the greatest of differences in geography, too, because the most beautiful land without the Sun of Righteousness shining on it is in spiritual darkness.
3. He makes all the difference in history as well, for without this baby of Bethlehem, the sequence of great events lose their meaning and their mystery.
4. Moreover, MUSIC without the Savior becomes jangling dischords and clanging cymbals, whereas when centered on sacred themes it becomes a worthy medium for God's praise.
5. Also, in LITERATURE this baby greatly exalts the human spirit when by inspiring the Book of Books he challenges the minds, imagination, and literary skills of all human authors who would write well for a universal audience of appreciative readers. Without this blessing, most of our literature will deservedly be forgotten in a generation.
6. The difference, too, He makes in ART distinguishes overvalued mediocrity from undervalued genius.
7. I think we can also say this baby of Bethlehem makes a profound difference in architecture, for without the influence of his house, the best human talents merely funble around with their futile attempts to scrape the skys with their ugly and defiant towers of Babel.



### III.A.

1. He certainly made a tremendous difference in the life of Saul of Tarsus, changing him from a church-persecutor to a gospel preacher and a first class missionary Apostle.

2. This Babe of Bethlehem transformed the cowardly Big Fisherman, who warmed his hands at the executioners' fire, to a bold and courageous preacher of Pentecostal fire, who challenged and defied the Christ-murderers.

3. Zaccheus the tax-collector was also dramatically changed by this One who came as a little Baby in Bethlehem. Zaccheus, we are told, "received Jesus joyfully" and determined to make 400% restitution of all whom he had wronged. That's SOME TURN-AROUND for a crooked politician!

4. We see a remarkable difference, in addition, in the blind beggar named Bartemeus, whose earnest prayer was answered, and he not only received his sight, but he found a Master worth following.

5. Moreover, this remarkable native of Bethlehem also transformed the life of a Jerusalem Pharisee named Nicodemus, who may have been the sole audience for Jesus's sermon on the New Birth and John 3:16, and who probably was never a secret believer again in his life; even when all the Apostles forsook Jesus and fled after the crucifixion, Nicodemus claimed the body and reverently buried it with the proper Jewish rites.

Since this Baby of Bethlehem made such a difference in the lives of Joseph and Mary, and all the other lives he touched on earth, He can without doubt make the great difference you need in your own life.

B. Christ, the Babe of Bethlehem, makes a difference in:

- |               |                   |
|---------------|-------------------|
| 1. Chronology | 7. Music          |
| 2. Geography  | 8. Architecture   |
| 3. History    | 9. The humanities |
| 4. Hymnology  | 10. Sociology     |
| 5. Literature |                   |
| 6. Art        |                   |

C. But the greatest difference He makes is in the spiritual realm.

D. The purpose of his birth was His redemptive work on the cross.

He was born to die.

III. What a Difference He makes in the Hearts and Lives of ~~the~~ People.

A. In the Bible

1. Saul of Tarsus
2. Peter the fisherman
3. Zaccheus the tax collector
4. Bartemeus the blind beggar
5. Nicodemus the religious ruler

B. Others in history

*Martin of Tours, "Now let me burn out for God"*

C. In your own life.

CONCLUSION: A famous English bishop, ~~named Spooner,~~

made an amusing verbal mistake on one occasion.

He spoke of "the tearful chidings of the gospel," instead of "the cheerful tidings of the gospel"!

Don't believe it when anyone makes that miserable substitution in proclaiming the good news of the Baby who was born in Bethlehem 1900 years ago.

This is the Baby that makes all the difference in the (world.

Has He made a real difference to your life?

If not, let Him make that difference now,

~~this very (morning,~~ this very moment!

1. Theology
2. Geography
3. History
4. Philosophy
5. Literature
6. Art
7. Science
8. Medicine
9. Law
10. Education
11. Agriculture
12. Industry
13. Commerce
14. Transportation
15. Communication
16. Social Sciences
17. Environmental Studies
18. Interdisciplinary Studies
19. Global Studies
20. Area Studies

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H.M.B.C.  
12/21/58

20 Dec. 1960 - H.C. CR. #1, Ft. Ben. Ga.  
25 Dec. 63 - Cent. Ch. Augsburg

24 Dec 66 - Ch. #3 Ft. Carson  
21 Dec 80 - Gateway B.C. St. Pet.  
12-22-82 Norwood Bp. Ch  
12-20-87 Max. Hts. B.C.