Christ Brought Changes to the World

Christmas is just around the corner – the celebration of the birth of the Christ Child. The world has never been quite the same place since God's Messiah came among us.

An old Christmas story reminds us of what our world would be like if Jesus had not come. It is about a little boy on Christmas Eve who hurriedly checks his stocking by the mantel and the beautiful Christmas tree in the living room before going to bed. He was so very excited, but it seemed as if he had not been asleep for long when a rather harsh voice shouted, "Get up!" Remembering that it should be Christmas morning, the boy bounded out of bed, pulled on his clothes, and hurried downstairs. What a shock awaited him!

No stocking hung from the mantel. There was no tree with presents beneath it. His parents were nowhere to be seen. Everything instead had a dull, drab look about it. The boy went to the door and was startled to hear the whistle from the local factory blowing its shrill call to work. "What's the plant doing open on Christmas day?" he wondered. Then he looked down the street. He saw no wreaths on doors, no bright lights in front of the homes. Instead, all the shops were open for business as usual. He hurried toward the center of town.

"Why are all the stores open on Christmas?" he asked a woman he met on the street. "Christmas?" she muttered. "I've never heard of it!"

Everywhere it was the same. People hurried by and no one even stopped to greet the now-fearful boy. Suddenly, he realized there was one place he could go where people knew about Christmas – his church! The boy and his family always went to the Christmas day service in the little church. He hurried as fast as he could along the street, but when he came to the location where the church should have stood, there was only a vacant lot filled with tall weeds and debris.

He thought of his school, but when he ran to the corner where it had stood, there was another vacant lot. He soon discovered the same was true of the spot where the town library had once stood, and the YMCA where he played basketball.

It was then the sorrowful boy heard a low moan. Looking down, he saw a man lying in the snow, obviously hurt. "A car hit me an hour ago," stammered the man, "and no one will help me! Please get some help!" In desperation, the boy decided he could run to the hospital just a few blocks away and get help. But even as he reached the street where the Good Samaritan Hospital had stood, he began to see another vacant lot – this time with an ugly wall around it. No hospital! No school! No church! No Christmas!

In agony of spirit, the little boy stumbled toward his home. The previous night, his father had read from the family Bible the wonderful story of the Savior's birth. As he entered the house, there was the Bible still by his father's chair in the living room. He opened it eagerly, but where the New Testament should have been, there was only a series of empty pages. Across one of the pages, someone had written the words, *If Only Jesus Christ Had Come.*

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The boy raced upstairs and flung himself on his bed, crying softly for a world that simply was no more. Suddenly, his mother's voice shouted excitedly, "Bobby, get up. It's Christmas morning!"

He jumped from his bed and ran to the window. Out there on the houses were beautiful wreaths. Brightly lit Christmas trees could be seen up and down the street. As he listened, he heard the chimes playing from the church tower, *Joy to the World, the Lord Has Come.*

"You did come," he whispered. "Thank you, Jesus, for coming to our world!"

Perhaps it is only a children's story, but it reminds us of the truth that the prophet Isaiah could see so clearly: The coming of the Christ means exciting changes – changes in us and in our world that will last long after Christmas is past.

Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel (Isaiah 7:14 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter