

couldn't even convince the majority of the French people.

What the Greeks, Romans, and French have failed to do, Jesus Christ has accomplished. His arrival on earth in human form became the focal point of dated history and the calendar of the world was His. It was Christianized. Now we date time as B.C. or A.D. "Before Christ" or "In the year of our Lord."



ACKNOWLEDGED BY AN ENEMY

THE Roman emperor Julian had professed Christianity in his early years of power, and claimed to be a Christian. Then — without warning and without any known reason — turned viciously against the Christians and vowed to exterminate all Christian churches and Christians from the empire.

One day, as a particular Christian was being whipped by a Roman soldier, Julian was watching the event and then began to taunt the victim by saying, "Where is your carpenter of Nazareth now?"

This Christian replied, "He is driving nails into your coffin, O Emperor." This proved to be quite accurate. It's reported that when Julian next went into battle he was mortally wounded and that he then clutched some of his spilling blood in his hands and threw it into the sky with these words: "Thou hast conquered, O Galilean."

Four hundred years after His birth, the relevance of Jesus Christ was acknowledged by a powerful enemy!



WHAT DID HE LOOK LIKE?

NO one living today has ever seen the physical face of Jesus Christ! In fact, we don't even have a clue as to His appearance. Why? Because the Early Church strongly disapproved of idols or any kind of carved or "graven" image. Therefore, there is no contemporary record of Christ's physical looks.

However, the earliest representations show Him as a beardless youth and these date from the 3rd century. The traditional vision of a bearded Christ began only in the 4th century. There are many carvings, paintings, and castings dating from the 12th century which depict Him in facial hair.

Contrast this to His life and teachings which were recorded within about 70 years of His death. The earliest document was St. Paul's letter to the Romans, written about A.D. 58. Then in quick succession came Mark's Gospel; Matthew's, which was written for Jewish believers; and Luke's, which was written for Gentiles. The last written account was penned by the beloved apostle John about A.D. 100.



HOW MANY COMMANDMENTS?

DEVOUT Jews obey or attempt to obey 613 different commandments! And included are the “Ten Commandments.” These commands are taken from the “Pentateuch,” the first five books of the Old Testament, which for the Jew is the most important of all religious texts. Together these commandments provide a moral framework for life.

When Jesus was teaching about life here on earth, He boiled all of the 613 down to only two! The first is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength and the second is to love your neighbor as yourself. Simplification . . . 613 down to 2! Simple, easy to understand . . . but a challenge to live out.



DID JESUS LAUGH?

DID the only Man who came from heaven to earth ever laugh? Do they laugh in heaven? The Bible puts this question to rest with the statement that in heaven there “no longer will be any curse” (Rev. 22:3). Yes, we all believe that heaven is one very happy place.

But did the Man who came from heaven laugh while He was here on this earth? Song creators, poets, writers, and artists have almost without fail portrayed Jesus as being the “man of sorrows . . . the man of griefs” but the Bible paints a very different picture.

Just consider one incident with me. The very first miracle Jesus performed was at a wedding! Have you ever attended a wedding that was sad? No! They are happy, joyous events. It happened in a small town, Cana. These Jewish weddings usually lasted for up to seven days and it was a matter of family pride that guests were to enjoy it to the fullest. Particularly with good

food and wine that was to last all the way to the end.

On the third day of this joyous occasion there was a problem — they ran out of wine. Jesus turned six pots of water into wine! The master of ceremonies said, “Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now” (John 2:10).

Did Jesus laugh? Draw your own conclusions. At the very beginning of His ministry He makes use of His omnipotent power NOT to point out a solemn moral, NOT to relieve a sufferer’s pain; NOT to preach — but to keep a happy wedding party from breaking up, to save a host and hostess from embarrassment!

Then, too, consider this: What kind of a self-portrait did Jesus paint of himself? He said He was a groom! A bridegroom who was celebrating with His followers! Yes . . . Jesus did laugh!



THE PEOPLE WHO COULD NOT WAIT

THE members of the “Order of the Star of the East,” who were led by a Hindu mystic named Krishnamurti, held a strange belief about the return of Jesus Christ to this earth. In fact, they believed so strongly that they built a 2,000-seat amphitheater in 1925 which cost more than \$100,000, in anticipation of this event which was to happen. Their strange belief was that Jesus would return to the earth, and in particular to this part of India. He would come walking across the Pacific Ocean to be welcomed by the waiting crowd in the seaside amphitheater. They gathered regularly for the next four years in preparation. When He did not arrive by 1929, this group finally gave up all hope and dissolved.



THE WORLD’S WORST CHURCH

THE “All Saints Church” of Sedlac, located in the former nation of Czechoslovakia, was completely looted of all its decorations and fine ornaments in the year A.D. 1600. However, this congregation was not deterred nor discouraged. These worshipers set about re-decorating their house of worship with human bones. They exhumed nearly 10,000 graves for what must

be the most macabre interior in all of Christendom. The highlights are a bony chandelier made up primarily of femurs and hundreds of skulls piled up in the shape of the “Schwarzenberk” family crest. It was all done in the name of Jesus Christ to honor some of His saints. In his well-known collection of books about travel, Fodor calls it a “ghastly fascination” and recommends that you stop in to take a look.

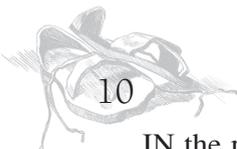


HE SERVED OTHERS

OFTEN, we underestimate the heart of God. We have a Creator who delights in giving . . . giving to us. Jesus said, “I always do what God asks me to do” (John 8:29). Then, later He also said that the father will do what you ask Him to (John 16:23). It’s an interesting picture of the godhead . . . a picture of these two members serving each other.

In fact, Jesus even served food to other people. After the people who had followed Him returned, hungry, He fed them all (Mark 8:1–10). One of the first acts, after returning from the dead was to have prepared a lake-shore picnic complete with broiled fish for His disciples (John 21).

The bottom line is that Jesus is a servant.



10. A MOST UNUSUAL STEEPLE

IN the past, it was not unusual to see Billy Graham or young people who were followers of the “Jesus Movement,” as well as others, flash the “one-way” sign. The right hand was raised with the index finger pointing heavenward. It may have seemed a new symbolism, but it was not new nor unique to the above.

This symbol has long been a favorite of any number of pulpiteers. An especially well-liked preacher of the First Presbyterian Church in Port Gibson, Mississippi, frequently used this gesture well over a hundred years ago. So in 1859, the worshippers of First Pres erected a steeple in his memory. On the very top, instead of the traditional cross, they placed a bronze cast of a hand with the index finger pointing upward toward heaven.