

AMERICAN COUNCIL OF CHRISTIAN CHURCHES
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BIBLE MESSAGES
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BIBLE MESSAGE

JESUS CHRIST, THE DIVINE REDEEMER

"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4:6).

Last week we talked about planning our lives. We saw the necessity of considering all the factors involved, noting particularly an extremely vital factor that cannot safely be ignored -- the personal activity and power of Almighty God.

To many people God seems remote and far off. Actually, of course, He is near. He controls all things. He is everywhere. Yet sometimes it is hard for people to realize this. They think of God as somehow abstract and distant. They long for a God who can understand the joys and sorrows of human life.

Christians believe that God has provided for this very need. At the center of their religion stands the conviction that God has appeared in human life and has entered fully into its experiences. The Creator of the universe -- the second Person of the Godhead -- took on Himself a human body and lived and died as a man among men.

It can be said of Christianity more truly than of any other of the great religions of the world that it is the religion of a person. Other religions have great teachers whose ideas they attempt to follow. Christianity claims as its founder God incarnate. Confucianism attempts to follow the ethical and political teachings of Confucius. Mohammedanism believes that Mohammed was a prophet of God and seeks to apply his message. Christianity alone among the great religions has as its originator One who claims actually to be the God who created the universe. It does not merely seek to follow its leader's teachings; it sets Him at the very center of its faith.

At first sight such a claim appears fantastic. It can hardly be accepted without the most exacting demand for proof. Let us examine some of the evidence.

Today the originator of Christianity has left a mark on the world beyond that of any other individual who ever lived. All events are dated before or after His life and every time we write the heading of a letter we give recognition to the fact that He is the center of history.

The character of Jesus Christ has held a great fascination for the imagination of everyone who has taken the time to read much about Him. Scarcely one of the great novelists but has longed to write a life of Christ and many of them have taken the task in hand. No other individual in all history has established so great an empire over the minds and hearts of men. Toward the end of his life Napoleon said, "Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne and myself founded empires. But upon what did we rest the creations of our genius? -- upon force. Jesus Christ alone founded His empire upon love; and at this hour millions of men would die for Him."

This One whose influence is so widespread throughout the earth lived and died in an obscure corner of the Roman Empire nearly 2000 years ago. He did not