

23

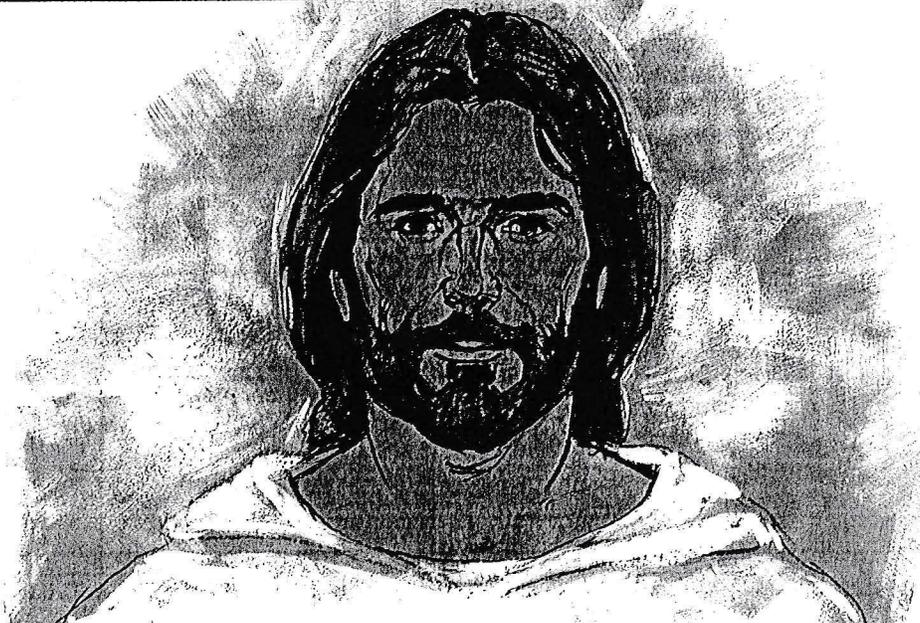
The Second Article—Jesus Christ: True Man

PICTURE STUDY

How do you picture Jesus? Find some pictures of Him. Which one do you think looks most like Jesus? Why?

WHY DID JESUS COME?

Read the following modern-day parables. Fill in the blanks at the end of each parable. Then be ready to answer this question: "In what way do the parables illustrate Jesus' coming to live on earth?"



Why Christmas?

by Dr. Wilton E. Bergstrand

Once in the dead of winter, in a land of ice and snow, a man saw a flock of birds numb with cold in his yard. As he watched them hopping about feebly over the frozen ground, looking vainly for food, he pitied them and wanted to rescue them. Opening a French window of his house, he laid a string of crumbs from the window sill to his kitchen, where there was an abundance of food and water and warmth and shelter. But the birds were afraid and wouldn't enter the house.

So the man went outside and tried to chase the birds in, but he succeeded only in frightening them out of his garden altogether. "Ah," he said, "if I were only a bird, then I could communicate with them. I could tell them that I mean well for them—and that I have prepared a refuge and a help for them."

Then it occurred to him that this is exactly what God did on the first Christmas—He became

This parable fits best the following verse from John 1:1-4, 14:

WHO WILL PAY THE PENALTY?

There was a great trial. The judge was on the bench, hearing the testimony. The question: "Who is responsible for all that has gone so terribly sour in the world?" No one was willing to accept the responsibility.

"And so," said the judge, "since nobody accepts the guilt of the horror of human history, we will hold God responsible. Let Him pay. Let Him become a man, a wanderer on the earth, homeless, hungry, thirsty, born of a woman, born a Jew, the misery of a tortured creation in His ears day and night."

The judge looked around the court. Even the archangels offered no protest. Gabriel would not speak for God. He agreed to go instead to a virgin whose name was Mary and tell her that she would have a Child. The archangel Michael said he would order the hosts of heaven not to protect this Child, who would be God on earth, so that He could suffer for the sins of the human race as a human being. Raphael said he would strengthen that young Man as He suffered and died. That was the verdict.

Who was the judge?

What is the penalty for sin?
(Romans 6:23)

Who paid it? (Philippians 2:5-8)

Why did He do it? (2 Corinthians 5:21)

TRUE MAN

Was Jesus really human—just like us? Or did He just look and act human, like a man from Mars in disguise? Check out these references below. Write what human activity or trait each reports.

1. Luke 2:7

2. Mark 3:5

3. Mark 4:38

4. Mark 11:12

5. John 11:35

6. John 19:28

7. Mark 15:37

So you see, Jesus was no make-believe human. He was a real man with real human experiences. Yet He was different in one important way. 1 Peter 2:22-23 says: "He [Jesus] committed no sin, and no deceit was found in His mouth.' ... when He suffered, He made no threats. Instead, He entrusted Himself to Him who judges justly."

WHY DID HE DO IT?

Why was it necessary for Jesus to be born, to live sinlessly as a true human being—and finally to die as a common criminal? Read each Bible reference below. Then complete the statement beside it with a truth about God and about people that lies behind His plan to send His only Son into the world.

1. Matthew 5:48: God's law requires ...

2. Ecclesiastes 7:20: No man except Jesus ...

3. Romans 6:23: God's justice requires that ...
