

What Would Have Been Is Only What Could Have Been

by Edmund E. Wells



The first baby born into the human family grew up to be the "grinch" that almost stole Christmas on the very doorstep of Paradise! Being materialistic in his thinking, Cain put "money" (goods) into the offering, but very little heart into his worship. His brother Abel, on the other hand, apparently had a discerning understanding of the Lord God's promise of the coming of One who would bruise the head of the serpent. His offering echoed the sacrifice in Eden of the Lamb to clothe his parents with skins and anticipated the sacrifice of The Lamb at Calvary to clothe the world with righteousness.

Being unfit to initiate the Messianic Line himself, Cain killed Abel, the only other one who could. Christ would have died with Abel, had not Seth, another brother been born.

Centuries and a devastating flood later, Esau, like Cain, had no interest in or appreciation for the Promise. As Cain before him, he loved the fruit of the earth, trading his birthright for a mess of lentils! What a privilege, what an honor, he so lightly dismissed and disposed of!

This honor is described so beautifully by Luke as it pertained to the little virgin of Nazareth. Luke 1:28, 30-33 records an angel's estimate of this favor:

"And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God. And, behold, you shall conceive in your womb, and bring forth a son, and shall call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

A short time later, Mary's cousin Elizabeth exalted "...with a loud voice," *"Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb."* -- Luke 1:42. Mary herself exclaimed in ecstasy, *"My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. For he has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty has done to me great things; and holy is his name."* -- Luke 1:46-49. Throughout eternity, Mary will look upon the God Man, with a sense of wonder, awe, and thanksgiving that she was honored to be chosen to contribute the human aspect or element of Jesus, her and our Savior!

Centuries before, Solomon had been chosen like Seth, like Shem, like Abraham, like Isaac, like Jacob, like David to be in the ancestral line of the Messiah. Nathan, the prophet, revealed the promise of God concerning Solomon to his father David, *"I will set up thy seed after thee,... and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever."* -- 2 Samuel 7:12-13. The writer of Chronicles recorded this same commitment on the part of God concerning Solomon, *"... his throne shall be established forevermore."* -- 1 Chronicles 17:14. The writer further revealed that David reported to Israel that God told him, *"Solomon your son, he shall build my house and my courts: for I have chosen him to be my son, and I will be his father. Moreover I will establish his kingdom forever."* Then David injected for the first time a condition for the continuity of Solomon's kingdom—an "if clause", i.e., -- *"... if he be constant to do my commandments and my judgments, as at this day."* --1 Chronicles 28:6-7. Then, in the presence of the congregation, David turned to Solomon and warned, *"... if you forsake him, he will cast you off forever."* -- 1 Chronicles 28:9.

It is a matter of record that Solomon built altars to other gods that he and his foreign wives might worship them, and God told him, *"... thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant."* -- I Kings 10:4-11. This was fulfilled as Jeroboam took 10 of the 12 tribes from the hand of Rehoboam, Solomon's son who succeeded him.

But this is not the greatest tragedy resulting from Solomon's disobedience! His descendants retained Judea and Jerusalem, but for his kingdom to last forever, one of these descendants had to be the eternal Messiah.

When Jesus was born of David's line in David's city of Bethlehem, He was born of Mary, a descendant of Solomon's brother, Nathan (Luke's genealogy, Luke 3:21). Joseph, the foster father of Solomon's line, stood by (Matthew's genealogy, Matthew 1:6).

I hope Solomon repented and made it to Heaven. If he did, I think that even as Mary's heart must swell with pride and joy at seeing her Son, Solomon's heart must surely grow heavy at the thought of what would have been! Forever, what would have been will only be what could have been!