

## Are You a Thermometer or a Thermostat?

“Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth” - Luke 1:26

It's interesting how cities are known for certain things. Rome is known as the Eternal City. Paris is called the City of Lights. New York is the City that Never Sleeps. And Las Vegas has been nicknamed Sin City.

Nazareth, too, could have been called Sin City in the first century. Overrun by Roman soldiers, it was one of those places you went through on the way to another place. Nazareth was also known for its sin. One commentator described it as a hotbed of corruption. This is why, when Nathanael heard that Jesus was from Nazareth, he asked, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” (John 1:46).

Imagine if Jesus were born today. We might expect Him to be born in Jerusalem, or maybe in Rome, London, or Paris. But what if He were born in Las Vegas? The Savior has arrived: Jesus of Las Vegas. That's what it would have been like to use the term Jesus of Nazareth.

In that wicked city, however, lived a young woman of royal blood. Living in an impure world, Mary was pure. She showed it is possible to live a holy life in an unholy place. We often blame our wicked culture for the way we are, but the fact is that it's our job as followers of Jesus to permeate and affect our culture.

Here's a question to ask yourself: Are you a thermometer or a thermostat? A thermometer is affected by its surroundings. Depending on the temperature, it goes up or down. In contrast, a thermostat affects its surroundings. Unlike the thermometer, it controls the environment around it.

Do you merely react to what is happening around you, or do you have some kind of impact on it? Are you changing the culture, or is the culture changing you?

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