



# **John M. Birch**

*May 28, 1918 - August 25, 1945*

## **An ambassador for Christ**

**II. Corinthians 5:20**



**JOHN BIRCH** was a Baptist missionary in a remote province of China during World War II when, through a series of extraordinary coincidences, he helped Colonel James Doolittle and several of his downed fliers to safety. He was subsequently inducted into the U.S. Army as an intelligence officer under General Chennault, and served for slightly over three years of America's war with Japan. His remarkable feats of personal courage and leadership helped immeasurably to bring about victory in China. Ten days following the end of the war, while on a peaceful mission for the Army, he was brutally killed by Chinese Communists.

**LIKE** many of the noble souls associated with America's founding, John Morrison Birch was a man rooted in principles that transcend politics. In a "prose poem" written at age 26, John Birch gave voice to his Jefferson-esque longing to **"live slowly, to relax with my family before a glowing fireplace ... to enjoy a good book ... to reach the sunset of my life sound in body and mind, flanked by strong sons and grandsons...."** Regrettably, John Birch's tireless service to God and liberty denied him such irenic pleasures.

At the age of seven, Birch expressed a desire to become a Christian missionary. Upon learning of the violence inflicted upon missionaries by Chinese communists, the youngster selected China as his mission field. When cautioned by his pastor that "more will be killed" in China, Birch replied: **"I know the big enemy is communism, but the Lord has called me. My life is in his hands, and I am not turning back."**

Birch's labors in China began in 1940, a time when the country was being ravaged by the Japanese military. After Pearl Harbor he dyed his hair black, adopted the garb of the local population, and continued his underground work behind enemy lines. He was a missionary for the World's Fundamentalist Baptist Missionary Fellowship and graduated from Bible Baptist Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. This seminary would later on name one of its buildings the John Birch Hall in honor of his achievements in China as well as his great influence on the seminary as an unwaveringly fundamentalist Baptist. Prior to his seminary studies John Birch attended Mercer University in Macon, GA where John and twelve others raised heresy charges against their Christianity Professor John Freeman. Freeman used his freedom of inquiry to point out contradictions in the Bible, but his trial so affected the stability of the university that he was unable to retain his teaching position. Praise God for a young man who stood up for the Bible.

While near the border of Japanese-occupied territory on the evening of April 19, 1942, Birch came upon Colonel James H. Doolittle and members of the raiding party that had just completed a dramatic

bombing raid on Tokyo. With his encyclopedic knowledge of the language, customs, and geography of China, Birch was able to convey Doolittle and the crews of 12 American bombers to safety in free China.

Shortly thereafter, Birch became an intelligence analyst as a second lieutenant with the China Air Task Force -- General Claire Chennault's legendary "Flying Tigers." Performing high-risk intelligence-gathering missions on the ground, Birch acted as "the eyes of the 14th Air Force," devising an early warning system that enabled U.S. air units to come to the aid of Chinese units under enemy attack. He also organized a rescue system for pilots who were shot down by the Japanese. Chennault credited Birch with the fact that 90 percent of his downed flyers were rescued. He also rescued the lives of many missionaries of the China Inland Mission who were stranded in China due to the Japanese invasion and the turmoil in the country. Those missionaries were put on US military airplanes that brought supplies in and provided an opportunity for the missionaries to fly out of the war zone. John Birch used his position to use American airplanes to get the missionaries out. Another Colonel who worked close to John Birch wrote about Birch's role as both soldier and missionary that the testimony he gave was not only a preaching but a living testimony. **"He was all over Central China. That one trip of 300 miles John told me himself that he 'witnessed' in village after village... The fact that he had the freedom to give out the Gospel (tracts which John took with him whenever he could) made him more valuable in his military work... The fact that John was a member of the Army and the Chinese knew he had been a missionary added to his prestige and gave greater influence with the Chinese."**

On August 25, 1945 -- ten days after the end of WWII -- Birch (by then a captain) was part of an official military mission to Suchow that was detained by Chinese communists. Captain Birch and another man were separated from their group and shot. An autopsy later demonstrated that after Birch had been immobilized by a gunshot to the leg, his hands were tied behind his back and he was shot execution-style in the back of his head. The communists had also desecrated Birch's dead body. His face smashed with bayonets, as was that of his aide, who was left for dead. This man survived to tell the tale. So it was that John Birch died, without ever knowing that the China for which he had given his all to help save had been betrayed into Communist hands by his own nation's leaders. In its desire to depict the Red Chinese as innocuous "agrarian reformers," the U.S. government suppressed the news of the unprovoked murder of Captain Birch. However, the Communists recognized John Birch as standing for America, for Christianity, and as the very embodiment of those qualities and forces which were in their way.

**AS THE** truth of John Birch's martyr death was uncovered years later, it was said about him: ***"If we rediscover some of our sounder spiritual values in the example of his life, recharge our determination from the spark of his courage, and learn essential truths about our enemy from the lesson of his murder, then his death at twenty-six ceases to be a tragedy"***

After reading about the life and death of John Birch, the reader might ask how we can rediscover those sounder spiritual values today. He is set for an example for us today that exhorts us to follow Christ. It was John Birch, who before his tragic death made a few profound prophetic statements about the time after World War II. He said: **"I believe that this war and the ensuing federations will set the world stage, as never before, for the rise of anti-Christ!"** He also warned about the **"lust-ridden years which will follow this war."** Is not that what we are observing today? We see how man shuts God out of his daily activities and lives a life that is dictated by marketing strategies, political correctness, and lust. This is not what God intended for man. Only Jesus makes man free from the bondage of sin and death. God wants to live within man and reign in the hearts of man. As John Birch expressed it: **"Often**

**in these days, I feel that those barren years are my apprenticeship, God-given, and that a message is being formed, by Him, within me, that will one day burn its way out and across man's barriers, into the souls of many men. I know that God is preparing me (has prepared, in some respects) to stand privation, pain, isolation, fatigue, and physical danger. To what end? That I trust Him to show me in His own time."**

Dear reader, do you have Jesus Christ in your heart and is He using you for His own glory? You can make peace with God right now. Come before the Lord Jesus Christ and give Him your life. Repent of all your sin, and tell Him you want Him in your life. Give your life into His hands. God's will is recorded in His Word, the Holy Bible, and you should nourish yourself in the word of God, so you can step on God's side and receive His wisdom on the many aspects of life. Do not forget that God loves you, and can cleanse you from your sin. Jesus revealed the love of God when He came and took your sin upon himself and died on the cross. What was he punished for? He lived a life without sin. But he took upon himself the punishment for your sin. You can read that in the Bible in Isaiah, chapter 53. Read also 2. Peter 2:24,25: **"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls."** Have you already returned to Jesus Christ, that good Shepherd? Do not hesitate or put off God's call. His grace is there to save you. You need to claim it by faith. Here is another scripture that tells you about what Jesus has done for you and is doing now. **"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore, God has also highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."** (Philippians 2:5-11)

All knees shall bow before Jesus Christ – either as Savior or as Judge. In this dispensation of the grace of God you can bow before Him and He will save you. But if you put off the salvation that is being extended to us by the Lord, then you will bow before the Lord Jesus later on at the White Throne judgement. That judgment is coming. The Bible says: **"And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."** (Acts 17:30) That judgment day is coming. However, Jesus Christ rose from the dead, so that you may have new life as well. **"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment."** (Hebrews 9:27) If you reject Jesus Christ, then this is what the judgment will be like: **And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. .... And whosoever was not found in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."** (Rev. 20:11,12,15) But there is a way to escape the wrath of God. Jesus has promised eternal life to those who come and bow before him.

John 3:16 **"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."**

God is faithful and keeps His promise. John Birch went to China to preach this gospel of the grace of

God to the people over there. What about you? John Birch was an ambassador for Christ in China, and he gave his life as a martyr. Killed by hell-bount, lost, wicked communists, who are deceived by Satan's lies and serve a dead, man-made philosophy. **“We pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.” (2. Cor 5:20)**

The following is the “prose poem” written by John Birch in April, 1945, four months before his death, that tells about his Christian point of view, his love of God, and his ability to point out the dangers of a secularized, godless society. It is an invitation to every reader to come to God, to repent of sin and to be saved, to live a holy life, a life that is simple and that is well-pleasing to the Lord.

## **THE WAR-WEARY FARMER**

*by John M. Birch*

I SHOULD like to find the existence of what my father called „Plain living and high thinking“.

I WANT some fields and hills, woodlands and streams I can call my own. I want to spend my strength in making fields green, and the cattle fat, so that I may give sustenance to my loved ones, and aid to those neighbors who suffer misfortune. I do not want a life of monotonous paper-shuffling or of trafficking with money-mad traders.

I ONLY want enough of science to enable fruitful husbandry of the land with simple tools, a time for leisure, and the guarding of my family’s health. I do not care to be absorbed in the endless examining of force and space and matter, which I believe can only slowly lead to God.

I DO not want a hectic hurrying from place to place on whizzing machines or busy streets. I do not want an elbowing through crowds of impatient strangers who have time neither to think their own thoughts nor to know real friendship. I want to live slowly, to relax with my family before a glowing fireplace, to welcome the visits of my neighbors, to worship God, to enjoy a book, to lie on a shaded grassy bank and watch the clouds sail across the blue.

I WANT to love a wife who prefers rural peace to urban excitement, one who would rather climb a hilltop to watch a sunset with me than to take a taxi to any Broadway play. I want a woman who is not afraid of bearing children, and who is able to rear them with a love for home and the soil, and the fear of God.

I WANT of Government only protection against the violence and injustices of evil or selfish men.

I WANT to reach the sunset of life sound in body and mind, flanked by strong sons and grandsons, enjoying the friendship and respect of neighbors, surrounded by fertile fields and sleek cattle, and retaining my boyhood faith in Him who promised a life to come.

**WHERE CAN I find this world? Would its anachronism doom it to ridicule or loneliness? Is there yet a place for such simple ways in my own America or must I seek a vale in Turkestan where peaceful flocks still graze the quiet hills?**

Based on what John Birch writes here I declare that I fully renounce this worldly modern society with its filthy temptations, images, materialism, etc.. I don't want to be influenced by society. Real saints need to be separated from society and separated unto God.