

Indifference to Christmas

Matthew 2:1-6

Matthew 2:1-6 (NASB)

¹“Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying,

² Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him.”

³ When Herod the king heard *this*, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

⁴ Gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born.

⁵ They said to him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for this is what has been written by the prophet:

⁶ ‘AND YOU, BETHLEHEM, LAND OF JUDAH, ARE BY NO MEANS LEAST AMONG THE LEADERS OF JUDAH; FOR OUT OF YOU SHALL COME FORTH A RULER WHO WILL SHEPHERD MY PEOPLE ISRAEL.’”

Each year, there’s a predictable variety of responses to the celebrations and traditions of the holiday season. During the next few days, we will examine three reactions to Christmas. Although 2,000 years have passed since Christ was born, His birth still elicits similar attitudes.

One common response is indifference. Even if they are filled with the holiday spirit and celebrate Christmas with gifts, dinners, decorations, and parties, some people remain totally indifferent to Jesus. He doesn’t even cross their minds because they’ve lost sight of the reason for Christmas.

In the story of the magi’s search for the newborn King of the Jews, we see a surprising indifference on the part of the religious leaders. The entourage from the East caused quite a stir in Jerusalem. It wasn’t every day that impressive visitors arrived with such a shocking and exciting announcement.

Yet when King Herod asked the scribes and chief priests where the Messiah was to be born, they simply told him the answer but made no attempt to go to Bethlehem themselves. Their lives were already filled with their religious duties, and they had no time or interest in anything that might disrupt their positions of prominence and authority.

Sometimes it’s easy to let the activities and pressures of Christmas push Jesus out of our thoughts. After all the shopping is finished, the gifts are wrapped, and the food is prepared, we might rush off to a Christmas Eve service. But even then, we often feel distracted. Though it may take deliberate refocusing, this year let’s intentionally make Jesus the priority of Christmas.