

Will You Miss the Baby?

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Luke 2:1-7; Matthew 2:1-6

Joke

Two men went to the train station with a friend. The train was late, so they sat down for a cup of coffee. They talked and drank and forgot about the train. Suddenly they heard the last announcement about the departing train. They all got up and started running. They ran down the tracks as the train was pulling out of the station. Two of the men made it to the last car and the third man was just not fast enough. The third man slowed to a stop and started laughing. An onlooker went up to the laughing man and said, "What are you laughing for? You just missed your train." "You're right," was the reply. "I did miss my train. What's funny is those two men came to see me off."

I think we are just like this guy who missed the train. But we don't miss trains. Many of us miss Christmas. Now we don't miss the day – but we miss the real meaning of the day – the fact that God came to this earth as a baby and His name is Jesus. Many people miss the baby so today I want to very briefly talk about some people who missed Christmas. Let me read a bit of the Christmas story to you.

1. The Innkeeper (Luke 2:7)

Luke 2:7

⁷and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloth and placed him in a manger because there was no guest room available for them.

The first person who missed Jesus was the innkeeper. Inns in those days were like campgrounds for all weary worn travellers. People usually just spread out their mats on the floor and slept there. These inns were not really that nice places. Well, we are told that this particular year there were many travellers on account of a census being called.

Caesar Augustus wanted more money, so he imposed a tax. To ensure he got what was owed to him, he wanted to count all the people, so everyone had to go and register where they were born and pay their dues.

Well, this meant that Joseph and Mary had to travel to Bethlehem. Mary was very heavily pregnant though and pregnant women don't travel quickly. So when they finally arrived at Bethlehem, the inn was full and there was no room for them.

If the innkeeper had known that the baby to be born that night was God – the creator of the world, no doubt he would have found room for them! But he missed the Baby. He was preoccupied with the concerns of the world. He was just too busy running his business, making a living, and saving for a better life to recognize that this Baby was the promised one who would save all of mankind.

Is that you today? – Are you too concerned about what this world has to offer – your studies, your business, your pleasure? Are you too concerned about your life or livelihood to see that this baby is special?

Yes, even though these things (like your studies and your business) are important in life, they should not become hindrances impeding us from coming to the King of kings. Don't miss the fact that Jesus came to give us things that no amount of money can buy. He is the one who can provide for us in our times of need.

Joke

I heard this story about a little old lady during the Christmas week. Apparently, the little old lady comes out onto her front porch every morning and shouts, "Praise the Lord!" And every morning the atheist next door yells back, "There is no Lord!" This goes on every day during Christmas week. "Praise the Lord!" yells the lady. "There is no Lord!" responds the neighbour.

As the week goes by, the lady is stressed because of financial difficulties and is worried about buying food and presents for Christmas as the family is coming over. She goes out onto the porch and asks God for help with the food and presents for her family, then says, "Praise the Lord!" The next morning when she goes out onto the porch, would you believe it? Bags and bags of groceries and presents were piled up on the porch! Of course, she shouts, "Praise the Lord!" Immediately upon hearing her say this, the atheist jumped out from behind the bush and exclaimed, "HA! GOTCHYA! I bought all that stuff. There is no Lord!"

The lady looks up to heaven and smiles. She shouts, "Praise the Lord! Not only did you provide for me, Lord, but you also made Satan pay for all of it!"

Philippians 4:19

¹⁹ And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.

Pause this Christmas to find out who this baby really is, and what He can offer. Don't miss the baby by being distracted by what the world offers – whatever the world gives will only be poor substitutes.

2. The Other Travellers and the Town Folk (Luke 2:3-4)

Luke 2:3-4

³ And everyone went to their own town to register.

⁴ So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David.

Not only did the innkeeper miss the baby, but so did the other travellers and those who were gathering in Bethlehem. The greatest event in the world was right under their noses, but they missed it. What would you do if you knew that the king of England or your favourite pop star was coming to your city, your suburb, your street? What if there was no room at the local motel or hotel for the person? Would you think of offering up your bed to that person?

No one gave a thought to offering a bed for this special baby who would soon be born to Mary. They all had their own concerns. Most of the fellow travellers were also on the road for the census. They were in a hurry to get to where they needed to be and were just too worn out from a long day's travel to take time to visit a baby.

The townsfolk were overrun by so many visitors coming into their city. They were so occupied with their busy lives. There were school reunions to go to, relatives to catch up with, and dinner with Aunty Peg and Uncle Bob. Their calendars were too full, and they were just too busy to squeeze in a visit to a tiny baby.

So often at Christmas time, our programs can become so hectic that we are just too tired to think about another thing. We are so busy trying to get somewhere in life or so busy doing things that we can't stop to give any time to the Baby and so we miss him. Is this you this morning?

Do you need to make time from some of your engagements this Christmas so you can find yourself in the presence of God or so that you might have time to ponder the meaning of Christmas, so you can visit this baby and find out what He can do for you? Don't miss the baby by being too busy.

3. King Herod (Matthew 2:1-3)

Matthew 2:1-3

2 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem ² and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."

³ When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him.

Among some of the characters involved in the original Christmas story were the Wise Men. They knew that a new king had been born because a special star had appeared in the sky. They followed this star to Jerusalem and they went to the palace of Herod to enquire who this newborn king was.

Now Herod was very different to the innkeeper and most other travellers. Herod was powerful, educated and influential – but he was also scared. He wasn't excited to hear about a competitor being born.

In fact, he was so upset that he ordered the murder of all baby boys under 2 years of age. Herod was scared of this new king because he thought that he would lose his throne and all that he enjoyed in life.

He missed the baby because he was scared of what he might lose.

Many people who live today are like Herod. They are scared that this baby will take away their freedom, their careers, their lifestyles, and their ambitions.

They are not willing for Jesus to be crowned the King in their lives and so they miss the baby and the chance to live the perfect life that God had created for them. Do you need to allow the King to take over the throne of your life this Christmas? Don't miss the baby because you are afraid.

But let us be like the Wise Men who genuinely sought after Jesus, and you will find him, and your life will be full of joy and peace.

John 10:10

¹⁰The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

4. The Religious Leaders (Matthew 2:4-6)

Matthew 2:4-6

⁴When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵"In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written:

⁶"But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for out of you will come a ruler
who will shepherd my people Israel."

The last group of people who missed Jesus were the religious leaders of the day – they were the like ministers and pastors – people who should have been able to recognize when God was doing something.

When Herod was trying to track down this baby, he went to the religious leaders to see if they knew anything about this promised King.

They did – they knew all about Him from prophecies in the Bible and knew that He would be born in Bethlehem. Do you know the funny thing – even though they were deeply religious, they didn't even bother to go and check out Bethlehem to see whether this special baby, God's Son, had been born that first Christmas!

They missed the baby because of their indifference or lack of interest. They had all the facts about the baby. They knew how special He would be. They knew He was God's son who would save them, yet they didn't really care.

They didn't think they needed a Saviour – they thought they were good enough and because of their indifference, they missed the baby. Many people today think in a manner that is similar to these religious leaders. They think that they are good people and will be good enough to impress God without the Baby – but they won't, and they can't.

We need the baby if we are going to be right with God – He came to die so we could be forgiven.

Romans 6:23

²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Without Him, we have no chance of pleasing God. Are you indifferent because you don't know why you need to be saved or because you think you are good enough on your own? Don't make this mistake this Christmas, don't miss the baby because of your indifference.

So here are 4 groups of people

- Some miss the baby because they are too distracted by all that the world offers now.
- Some miss the baby because they are too busy and don't have time to find out about Him.
- Some miss the baby because they are too scared to let Him take control of their lives.
- Some miss the baby because they are indifferent or ignorant of their need for a Saviour.

This Christmas, we want to offer you the greatest gift of all – a baby who was born in a manger. His name is Jesus Christ and He is the saviour of the world. Will you be willing to receive Him as your personal saviour, will you be willing to receive Him as King of your life?