

## Lessons we learn from the Christmas Story

*Luke 2 & Matthew 1:16-2:18*

As church leaders, there's a good chance we've heard the story from Luke 2 and Matthew 1 more times than we can imagine. We are so familiar with this narrative that we may skim over it when we read. So, what is it that we can learn from this well-known piece of scripture? What can we, as leaders, learn from the leaders of Mary and Joseph's time? Everything we know about the priest's, king's and leaders during those days can be found in Matthew 2. They are only mentioned in a few verses, yet there's a good bit we can discern from their actions.

1. Herod had a problem with jealousy and fear. Jealousy is not a becoming attribute in a ruler. It's not a healthy attitude for anyone in a leadership position. It causes us to do things that harm others and disregard what's best for those we serve. As leaders it's important to remember that we are really servants. Consider how our country would change if Senators and Representatives remembered that they are servants rather than the most important people in America. As leaders it's our job to pray and evaluate options and decide what will be the best for the congregation as well as what's in line with God's Word. Jealousy and the fear of someone getting ahead of us will hinder us in our role of being the model of Christ to the world.

2. The Chief Priests and Teachers of the Law were complacent. These guys are only mentioned in passing. We don't even consider their role in Christ's birth. However, I wonder, why didn't they become inquisitive after their King's questions? King Herod was looking for clues to where the Messiah might be born. After they answered him, these leaders of Israel didn't even begin to pursue the reason behind his inquisitive mind. The whole nation of Israel had been eagerly anticipating the arrival of the Savior of the Jews for 1000's of years. One would think that these men who were in charge of the spiritual life of the nation would be curious when the King started asking about what the ancient texts said about where they might find the Messiah. However, these leaders were complacent. They were content with the status quo. A Messiah might mess up their plans. Complacency will get us in trouble every time. We need to be content, but when we become so satisfied with where we are that we don't look forward, our leadership will become ineffective. Complacency will cause us to avoid those things that need changed and we'll become the kind of church that begins to say those seven deadly words, "we've never done it that way before."

Now it's time to look at what kind of leader you are. Do you worry about being "better" than everyone else or are you willing to lead by serving? Do you need the notoriety or can you be an invisible leader, getting the job done with no one knowing what you're doing?

We each have been given an awesome responsibility to lead in Christ's Kingdom. Let's learn a lesson from these first century leaders and put aside jealousy and envy. Let us be content and enjoy all that Christ has given without being complacent or overly satisfied with life. Let us learn our lessons well so we can lead effectively, earnestly and like Christ.

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