

LOOKING FOR JESUS

“After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him.” (Matt 2:1-2)

Since Jerusalem was the capital of Judea this would be the logical place to look for the new king. Jesus, of course, wasn’t there. Of all things, Jesus had been born in a manger in the obscure village of Bethlehem. That’s where the shepherds found Him (Lk. 2:1-20). At the time the wise men arrived, however, Jesus and his family were living in a house (Matt. 2:10) The point is, conventional wisdom does not tell you where to find Jesus.

After spending some time in Egypt, Jesus and His family moved to Nazareth. This was another small and obscure village where you would not expect to find royalty (Matt. 2:232). In fact the reputation of that little town was so bad that when Nathanael heard that Jesus lived there, he quipped: “Can anything good come from there” (Jn. 1:46).

After Nazareth Jesus chose another unlikely place to live. **“Leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum, which was by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali” (Matt 4:13).** Matthew informs us that Jesus selected Capernaum to fulfill a prediction made by Isaiah the prophet, but this was again an unlikely place to find Jesus. Capernaum was a citadel of unbelief. Jesus said: **“And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the depths. If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Sodom, it would have remained to this day. But I tell you that it will be more bearable for Sodom on the day of judgment than for you.” (Matt 11:23-24).**

If you were looking for Jesus, where would you find Him? Perhaps in the home of notorious sinners like Matthew (Matt. 9:11), or Zacchaeus (Lk. 19:1 - 9). When the Pharisees realized where Jesus was complained to His disciples: **“Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?” (Matt. 9:11).** The answerer was: **“It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick” (Matt 9:12).** **“For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.” (Luke 19:10)**

The late Ballard Flint was the town drunk of Fairland, Oklahoma. When he became a Christian some of his drinking buddies made fun of him. They would say: “Ballard, since you are now a Bible scholar, why don’t you tell us where Jesus was born”? To their taunts this new believer pointed to his heart and said: “I really don’t know where Jesus was born, but I do know where He is living”. His answer was quite profound. It was in perfect harmony with the words of Isaiah: According to Isaiah God said: **““Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. Where is the house you will build for me? Where will my resting place be? Has not my hand made all these things, and so they came into being?” declares the Lord. "This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word.” (Isa 66:1-2)**

Please do not miss the significance of these words. The Sovereign of the universe actually prefers to take up His abode in the shambles of a broken and contrite heart. Remarkably, God has intrusted every one of us with the key to finding Jesus: **“You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart” (Jer 29:13)** One day Jesus may be in the tombs ministering to a demon possessed man (Mk. 5:1 - 18); on another day He might be ministering to a sinful woman in the home of a Pharisee (Lk. 7:36 - 50); on another day He might be walking with two men on the Road to Emmaus (Lk. 24:13 - 35). It is significant to note that these two men walked with Jesus but didn’t know who He was. The same thing can happen today. Jesus might be someone you meet today who is hungry, thirsty, lonely, naked, sick, or in prison (Matt. 25:31-46). Remember! The key to finding Christ is searching for Him with all your heart!