

CHRISTIANITY IS NOT CONVENIENT

“As Paul discoursed on righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and said, “That’s enough for now! You may leave. When I find it convenient, I will send for you.” (Acts 24:25)

Felix, the Roman governor was stationed in Caesarea. Paul was taken there by soldiers. Felix was “well acquainted with the Way” (Acts 24:22). He and his Jewish wife sent for Paul who spoke to them about righteousness, self-control, and judgment to come. Felix deferred making a decision for Christ until it was “convenient”. He talked “frequently” with Paul, but apparently never became a Christian. The reason, of course, is obvious. Christianity is not designed to be convenient.

Jesus put it like this: **“If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.” (Matt 16:24)** Crosses are just not convenient. If you are waiting on a “convenient cross” you are waiting in vain.

The Christmas story is one of the most beautiful stories in the world, yet notice how many integral aspects of this story were not convenient.

- Zachariah and Elizabeth were well advanced in age when they became the parents of John the Baptist. Not convenient!
- John the Baptist drank no wine or strong drink and lived in the desert. Not convenient!
- John wore a camel’s hair garment and ate locusts and wild honey. Not convenient!
- Mary was an unmarried virgin when Gabriel told her she would give birth to the baby Jesus. Not convenient!
- Mary traveled many miles to Judea to visit her kinswoman Elizabeth. Not convenient!
- Mary lived in Nazareth but Jesus had to be born in Bethlehem. Not convenient!
- When they arrived in Bethlehem there was no room for them in the inn. Not convenient!
- Jesus was born in a stable, and placed in a manger. Not convenient!
- Shepherds left their flocks in the field to worship the baby Jesus. Not convenient!
- Joseph, the foster father of Jesus, was too poor to sacrifice a lamb and therefore had to offer doves or pigeons for Mary’s purification. (Lk. 2:24; Lev. 12:8) Not convenient.
- Wise men came to worship the baby Jesus from hundreds of miles away. Not convenient!
- They presented Him with expensive gifts of gold, incense, and myrrh. Not convenient!
- Herod sent out his soldiers to kill the baby Jesus. Not convenient!
- Joseph, Mary, and the baby Jesus had to flee to Egypt for safety. Not convenient!
- Jesus and His family lived in that foreign land until Herod died. Not convenient!
- They returned to Nazareth where many believed Jesus was born of fornication (John 8:41). Not convenient! Etc.

Architects design houses to be convenient. Merchants design stores to be convenient. Automobiles are designed to be convenient. Christianity, however, is not designed to be convenient!

Notice how many automatic things we have at our fingertips. Many cars have automatic door locks, automatic transmissions, automatic wind shield wipers, radios that tune automatically, electric seats, electric windows, cruise control, and other accessories too numerous to mention. The doors at the grocery store open automatically, garage doors open automatically, phones dial automatically, some cell phones even dial automatically when you speak a certain name. But Christianity is not automatic. You cannot become a Christian by merely pushing a button, or placing yourself in front of an electric eye.

God is no respecter of persons. Wealthy and educated people do not have an advantage over the poor and illiterate. Everybody becomes a Christian in identically the same way. Everyone must deny himself and take up a cross. That cross, however, is your guarantee of happiness, joy, and eternal life.

MERRY CHRISTMAS!