

Alpha Counseling Services

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Dear Friends

As I reviewed the Christmas story this year I found an interesting nugget. Jesus came when He wasn't expected. The last prophet, Malachi, had been gone four hundred years and everyone had settled into 'tolerable traditions' to await the Messiah's return. It appears, from the Christmas Story that the majority of those who should have been anticipating His return were not.

In another context Jesus says in Luke 12:40: "*You too be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour that you do not expect.*" Oswald Chambers said; "Jesus rarely comes where we expect Him. He appears where we least expect Him and always in the most illogical situations. The only way a servant can remain true to God is to be ready for the Lords surprise visits. This readiness is not brought about by service, but through intense spiritual reality, expecting Jesus Christ at every turn. If we are going to be ready for Jesus we must stop being religious. In other words, we must stop using religion as if it were some kind of lofty lifestyle."

I wonder if our mania for activities from Thanksgiving through New Year's Day doesn't push the real meaning of Christ's birth into the background so far He gets neglected. I don't mean He is forgotten completely, just brushed aside as we hurry to choir practice, kids programs with the video camera, or even mandatory family dinners. What if He is sitting along the road, with His four way flashers on, and we drive by on our way to a church function in too much of a hurry to help.

In Matthew 25:31-46 Jesus tells of judgment based on how we have cared for the hungry, thirsty, and those without clothing or shelter. Verse 45 says: "*Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.*"

I hope your Christmas will be different this year, better, as you expectantly look for the secret appearing of Jesus.

May God richly bless you and yours this joyous Christmas Season.

Richard & Debi