



A SERIES OF CHRISTMAS MESSAGES BY DR. JOE K. TAYLOR, SENIOR PASTOR  
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All Scriptures are printed verbatim with translations noted. • Pastor Joe's email is Joe@southreno.com.

## A. The Sanhedrin and "Six Miles"

**The Sanhedrin** (The Assembly) – In Deuteronomy 16, Moses instructed Israel to appoint 70 men to serve as a high court. The two primary groups were the **Pharisees** (religious teachers/lawyers/scribes who believed in the supernatural—hell, heaven, angels, demons, miracles, keeping the law) who focused on the Torah (Law) and sought **eternal life** and **Sadducees** (political teachers/lawyers/doctors who did not believe in the supernatural) who focused on the *Tanakh* (OT) and the Temple seeking a **better life**. The Sadducees—controlled by the Sanhedrin in the time of Christ—were like our US SUPREME COURT—they had final say as the leaders of Israel.

**Think of all that the teachers of the law knew about the coming of the Messiah:**

*The Tanakh* (OT) said, He would be born of the seed of the woman (Genesis 3:15),

He would be a descendant of Shem (Genesis 9:26).

He would be of the seed of Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3).

He would be a descendant of Isaac (Genesis 22:18).

He would be a descendant of Jacob (Genesis 28:14).

He would be of the tribe of Judah (Genesis 49:10).

He would be a "son of David" (2 Samuel 7:11,12,16).

He would be born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14).

He would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2), so to summarize:

1. He will be a **Jew** (both by birthright and ancestry).
2. He will come from the **tribe of Judah**.
3. He will be a **descendant of King David**.
4. He will be **born of a virgin**.
5. He will be **born in Bethlehem** (only 6 miles from Jerusalem).

## B. The Sadducees: "Why didn't they go?"

### 1. Their **knowledge** made them **intellectually lazy**.

2 Timothy 3:5, NLT - <sup>5</sup> They will act religious, but they will reject the power that could make them godly. Stay away from people like that!... <sup>7</sup>[they are] forever following new teachings, but they are never able to understand the truth.

### 2. Their **religion** made them **spiritually indifferent**.

Jeremiah 5:20–21, NLT - <sup>20</sup> "Make this announcement to Israel, and say this to Judah: <sup>21</sup> Listen, you foolish and senseless people, with eyes that do not see and ears that do not hear.

### 3. Their **background** made them **culturally irrelevant**.

Revelation 3:15, NASB95 - <sup>15</sup> 'I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot.

Those Sadducees who should have been leaders were no leaders; they would not even be followers of that which is good, for they had no heart towards Christ.  
– C.H. Spurgeon

It is truly an instance of base sluggishness, that not one of the Jewish Sadducees offers himself as an escort to those foreigners (ie., Mary, Joseph, and Jesus), to go and see the King who had been promised to their own nation.  
– John Calvin

As I read Matthew 2, one fact strikes me above all others. *Everybody involved had the same basic information.* They all knew a baby had been born in Bethlehem and they all knew who the baby was. Herod knew and tried to kill him; the Sadducees knew and ignored him; the Wise Men knew and worshipped him.  
– Warren W. Wiersbe

## C. POINT: God is on mission to be found!

### 1. Ponder this: The stable speaks of **hostility, humility, and availability**.

### 2. You must make your heart a manger where Christ can be born.

Battlegrounds: *Calendar, Check book, To-do List, and Prayer List.*

### 3. You must recognize and receive Him as Lord.

John 1:10–11, NIV - <sup>10</sup> He was in the world but...the world did not recognize him. <sup>11</sup> He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.