

DECEMBER

19

The Regeneration

JOHN 1:1-14

To all who believed him and accepted him, he gave
the right to become children of God.

JOHN 1:12

THE MAGI FOLLOWED the light to Bethlehem in search of a new king. What they discovered was a different sort of king—not the ruler of nations (at least not yet), but the source of life itself. Heads of government rule people, armies, territory, and resources; however, they have no authority over life itself. They can command behaviors, not hearts. But the one who offers life and transformation? That's a greater King. That comes from a much, much



higher authority. A King of light and life overshadows all other claims.

How do you honor a King from the realm of the spirit? With a spiritual response, of course. He has no visible palace to enter into, no discernible armed forces to lead, no natural resources to exploit or territories to defend. That doesn't mean he is immaterial—he entered into human flesh, after all, and he did receive offerings of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. But those are tokens of a much deeper reality. They are signs of more significant offerings, investments in the higher realm. To enter into the Kingdom of God, a human being must acknowledge Christ's authority and declare loyalty to him. In simpler terms, we call it faith.

We see that response even in the earliest witnesses to the Incarnation—Zechariah and Elizabeth, Mary and Joseph, the shepherds, and the magi, all of whom said yes to what God was doing. They had no developed messianic theology; they could not have known the full implications of Jesus' identity or his mission. But they entered into the story God was writing by recognizing his work and opting



in. Their responses did not depend on comprehending the biblical context of salvation by grace through faith, though most surely grew in understanding later. No, in simply believing, they pointed toward the fundamental nature of the Kingdom itself—that we become God’s children when we are born of his Spirit by faith. Once we recognize the one who was born in Bethlehem, we experience a birth of our own.

This is the regensis that restores the image of God in us and makes us reflections of his glory. By acknowledging the light that came into the darkness, we become lights in the darkness ourselves. The glory of Advent becomes the glory of our own rebirth. We take on the nature of the one whose nature transcends this visible realm.

Prayer

Lord, may my faith always be real—from my heart, full of gratitude, fully aware of who you are. Thank you for my rebirth as your child. Amen.



REFLECTION

What does it mean to “believe him and accept him”? What does genuine faith look like in the life of a child of God?

Further reading: John 17:22-24



So God imparts to human hearts
the blessings of his heaven.

“O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM,” PHILLIPS BROOKS