

The first coming of Christ was prophesied often in the Old Testament. For thousands of years God informed His people of the coming of their Messiah. Yet, when he actually arrived, only a handful of people were watching and waiting.

Shepherds were in the vicinity of Bethlehem keeping watch over their flock when an angel of the Lord appeared unto them.

Luke 2:8 and 9

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

The angel brought them good news of great joy. To these humble shepherds was given the great announcement that Christ the Lord was born.

Verses 10-12

And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

And this *shall be* a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

God invited the shepherds to see His only begotten son. The scene which follows is breathtaking. The shepherds were allowed to view the heavenly host praising God. God and the angels included these men in their glorious rejoicing regarding the birth of Christ.

Verses 13 and 14

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

The corresponding records about the birth of Christ give no indication that anyone else was involved in this monumental occasion. God did not send the angel to declare Jesus Christ's birth to King Herod, to the High Priest, to the religious leaders, nor to other wealthy, powerful men in Judea. Instead, He sent His angel to humble, receptive shepherds – to those He knew would believe and obey.

Verses 15 and 16

And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to

another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

Bethlehem was overflowing with people. Those from the countryside had come in to pay their taxes. So crowded was this city that a full-term, pregnant woman, Mary, could only find shelter in a stable! Yet, with all these people, not one was watching and waiting for the birth of Christ. If any one of the residents of Bethlehem believed his Messiah was being born, would not he have offered his bed?

Forty-one days after Jesus' birth, his parents fulfilled the law by offering a sacrifice for their new son. Jesus was brought to the temple in Jerusalem.

Verse 22

And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present *him* to the Lord;

While in the temple they encountered two wonderful people. The first was Simeon, an elderly man dedicated to God and waiting for the consolation of Israel. God allowed Simeon to see Christ before he died.

Verses 25-32

And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name *was* Simeon; and the same man *was* just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him.

And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law,

Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said,

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word:

For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,

Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people;

A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.

Simeon understood the awesome privilege that was

given to him. His desire to see Christ opened the door for God to bless him. As Simeon finished his prophecy, another great believer became involved, and that was Anna, the prophetess.

Verses 36-38

And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity;

And she *was* a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served *God* with fastings and prayers night and day.

And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

The temple was the great center of worship for Israel. The high priests, Sanhedrin, scribes, other religious leaders, and thousands of worshipers could have been there the day Jesus was presented to the Lord. The only ones involved were Simeon and Anna. These two apparently were watching and waiting. Both expressed great thanks for having lived to see the Christ.

The "wise men" or Magi were the next ones to see the promised seed.

Matthew 2:1-3

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem,

Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

When Herod the king had heard *these things*, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

The political and religious leaders in the city of Jerusalem had not been aware that the king of the Judeans had been born. They certainly did not know that a star announced his birth before the Magi arrived. The Magi left Jerusalem and went to Bethlehem.

Verses 9 and 10

When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.

When they saw the star, they rejoiced with

exceeding great joy.

They found the young child in a house, not a stable or in a manger. There were no shepherds present because this was not the night Jesus was born but more than one year and three months later.

Verse 11

And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

The Magi were Gentiles from another kingdom. They had read the astronomical, heavenly displays and figured out the Messiah had been born. That these men were able to do this and not one soul in Israel, is a shameful testimony of the lack of passion Israel had for the coming of Christ.

The shepherds, Simeon, the prophetess Anna, and the Magi are the only ones mentioned for being involved

with his first coming. These humble souls apparently were watching and waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

As in their time, the Word of God clearly, consistently, and emphatically tells us of his second coming. The signs in heaven and on earth seem to be multiplying at a convincing rate. Many are talking about the end of the world. The predictions seem to be abounding. Yet, do we really believe he is coming soon? Are we watching and waiting? Will there only be a few this time around who are truly convinced and eagerly waiting?

In that he came the first time and the Word of God continuously tells us he is coming again, we should be absolutely convinced. We really should not heed the current, intense, fearful propounded declarations.

Jesus Christ is coming back! God, help us to watch and wait as Your Word tells us to do!