

A CHRISTMAS SERIES
“A CLOSER LOOK AT THE MESSIAH”
PART FOUR
“THE RESPONSE TO THE MESSIAH”
LUKE 2:1-20; MATTHEW 2:1-12

INTRO: Over the last several weeks we have been **TAKING A CLOSE LOOK AT THE MESSIAH** as a part of our Christmas series of messages. As you will recall we have examined **THE NEED OF THE MESSIAH, THE PROPHECIES OF THE MESSIAH AND THE BIRTH OF THE MESSIAH**. Today we shall conclude the series by examining **THE RESPONSE TO THE MESSIAH**. The question we all should consider is: **IN LIGHT OF WHO THE MESSIAH IS, ARE WE RESPONDING TO HIM PROPERLY IN OUR PERSONAL LIVES?** In this message we will observe how the **SHEPHERDS** and the **MAGI** responded to the birth of the Messiah and take some lessons from them on how we should respond to Him today in our lives.

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I. THE RESPONSE OF THE SHEPHERDS – LUKE 2:1-20

A. Who Were the Shepherds?

ACCORDING TO THE TALMUD (Jewish Civil and Religious Law)

1. The Shepherds were the Lowest of all People in that day.
2. The Shepherds were NOT allowed in the Courts of the Temple.
3. The Shepherds were not allowed to Receive help from Others.
4. The Shepherds tended sheep for Sacrifice in the Temple.
5. The Shepherds were chosen by God to be the FIRST observers and messengers of the Birth of the Messiah.

GOD CHOSE THE MOST HUMBLE OF HUMANITY TO BRING THE MOST GLORIOUS MESSAGE OF HOPE TO HUMANITY

B. What Did the Shepherds Witness?

1. They saw The Angel of the Lord’s Sudden Appearance to announce Messiah’s birth – Vs. 9a.
2. They saw The Glory of the Lord Accompanying the Angel of the Lord
-Vs.9b

NOTE: THE GLORY OF THE LORD WAS THE WHITE SHINING CLOUD OF INTOLERABLE BRIGHTNESS, KNOWN AS THE SHEKINAH GLORY OF GOD. THIS WAS THE VISIBLE TOKEN OF THE ETERNAL GOD SEEN IN THE OLD TESTAMENT SUCH AS IN THE BURNING BUSH WHEN GOD CALLED MOSES AND THE CLOUD THAT LED ISRAEL THROUGH THE 40 YEARS IN THE WILDERNESS.

3. They saw The Heavenly Host of Angels – Vs. 13
-Probably TENS OF THOUSANDS of Angels

C. How Did the Shepherds Respond?

Vss. 15-20

1. They Immediately left their Sheep to see Christ – Vss. 15,16
2. They Proclaimed the Good News of Christ’s Birth – Vss. 17-19

THESE MEN WHO WERE AT THE BOTTOM OF THE SOCIAL SCALE WERE CHOSEN AS THE FIRST PREACHERS OF THE NEW BORN KING!

3. They Worshipped God for the News of the Messiah – Vs. 20
 - a. For What they Saw.
 - b. For What they were Told.

IN ESSENCE, THE SHEPHERDS TOOK A CLOSE LOOK AT THE MESSIAH AND PREACHED HIM TO OTHERS WHILE THEY EXALTED HIM IN THEIR OWN LIVES. IN DOING SO THEY PUT THE THINGS OF GOD FIRST AS THEY LEFT THEIR FLOCKS AND DID THE KING’S BUSINESS! WHAT A LESSON THAT IS FOR US!

ILLUSTRATION:

II. THE RESPONSE OF THE MAGI – MATTHEW 2:1-12

(Occurred probably six months to two years after Messiah’s Birth)

A. Who Were the Magi?

1. The Magi were likely Gentiles of High Position from the Country of PARTHIA, located north east of Babylon, about 600 miles from Jerusalem, who were given special revelation about Messiah’s birth. The number of the Magi is not known.

2. The Magi were a multitude of scientists and astronomers who obviously knew at least one OT prophecy of the Messiah (Numbers 24:17).

B. What Did the Magi Do?

1. The Magi first saw the STAR OF THE MESSIAH, which was undoubtedly **THE SHEKINAH GLORY OF GOD** that led them to Jerusalem.

2. The Magi enquired about the Messiah's birth from the MOST WICKED PERSON on earth at that time...HEROD THE GREAT known as THE KING OF THE JEWS whom the Jews hated.

QUESTION: **WHY DID THE STAR LEAD THE MAGI TO HEROD RATHER THAN RIGHT TO BETHLEHEM?**

1) To fulfill the prophecy of Hosea 11:1 that God would call His son out of Egypt.

2) To fulfill the prophecy of Jeremiah 31:15 that great weeping would come from RAMA (six miles north of Jerusalem) over the killing of their children.

C. How Did the Magi Respond – Vs. 11

1. They left their homes and traveled many miles to get a close look at the Messiah.

2. They Fell Down and Worshipped the Messiah. You will note that they did not worship Mary. If she was ever to be worshipped it would have been then...BUT THEY WORSHIPPED CHRIST!

3. They worshipped with the BEST GIFTS worthy of a King that really spoke of the Messiah's entire life.

a. The Gold – The Messiah's Royal Kingship

b. The Frankincense – The Messiah's Beautiful Life

c. Myrrh – The Messiah's Death

IN ESSENCE THE MAGI MADE THE WORSHIP OF THE MESSIAH A SACRIFICIAL PRIORITY AS THEY TRAVELED MANY MILES AND GAVE HIM THE VERY BEST GIFTS POSSIBLE.

ILLUSTRATION:

III. THE RESPONSE OF THE BELIEVERS

A. Who are the Believers?

1. All who have trusted Christ alone as personal Savior.

2. Are YOU a part of the number?

B. What Should Believers Do?

-Make an Effort to get a Closer Look at the Messiah

C. How Should Believers Respond?

FOLLOW THE EXAMPLE OF THE SHEPHERDS AND THE MAGI

1. Focus on the Messiah a Priority.

2. Worship of the Messiah a Life's Commitment.

3. Present the Messiah with Gifts.

a. Our Life

b. Our Possessions

4. Proclaim the Messiah to Others

ILLUSTRATION:

APPLICATION/CONCLUSION:

1) Trust Christ Jesus as your Personal Savior, if you have not done so already.

2) Give your life to the Messiah in worship, praise, service and sacrificial commitment.