

SOME WHO SPOKE OUT AT THE FIRST CHRISTMAS

Galatians 4:4-5

Introduction: In the fullness of time God turned to His angel, Gabriel, the chief spokes-angel, and told him to go make the necessary arrangements for the Messiah to come. The Christmas story is the result of God's decision to send Gabriel to get things started. The story is very familiar to us, so let's focus on a few who spoke out about that first Christmas.

I. GABRIEL, THE ANGEL OF GOD, SPOKE AND FORETOLD OF THE COMING BIRTH

- Gabriel is God's chief messenger and often has brought word direct from God to people all through the Old Testament times.
- Gabriel first brought a message from God to Zacharias, an elderly priest, that he would father a son and that son would be the forerunner of the Messiah.
- Gabriel then brought God's message to Mary, that she was God's choice to be the mother of the promised Messiah.
- Gabriel lastly brought God's message to Joseph, engaged to Mary, that her pregnancy was alright and that she had not been unfaithful and that it was alright to continue with the marriage.

II. ZACHARIAS SPOKE IN DISBELIEF

- The angel, Gabriel, brought God's message to Zacharias during the time of his duties in the temple, that he was going to be a father.
- Zacharias questioned the angel and the message and expressed disbelief because both he and his wife were well past the age of bearing children.
- Because of his disbelief, the angel took away Zacharias' speech, leaving him unable to even tell his wife or anybody else what had taken place.
- Upon the birth of the promised son, Zacharias' speech returned when he wrote that the child would be called "John."

III. ELIZABETH SPOKE IN EXCITEMENT AND JOY

- Upon learning of the angel's visit to her husband, Zacharias and that her barrenness would soon end, Elizabeth broke out in song and joy.
- Barrenness was thought to be a curse from God and people tended to gossip about those without children. Now that would change.
- When Mary visited her during her sixth month of pregnancy, Elizabeth was even more joyful as her baby kicked within her for she knew that along with Mary's coming baby, her own son would have something great to do for the promised Messiah.

IV. MARY SPOKE IN WONDER

- As Gabriel, the angel of God, told Mary of being selected by God to be the mother of the promised Messiah, she was filled with wonder. Why her? Who was she?
- Mary felt most unworthy of being God's choice, but accepted it with much humbleness and obedience.
- Her only question was how could it happen? As the angel explained, Mary was filled with wonder at God's choice of her and His power to bring a baby from a virgin.

V. JOSEPH SPOKE OUT OF REASON

- Upon learning that his future wife was pregnant, Joseph tried to decide what to do. He could turn her over to the religious authorities for punishment or, he could divorce her.
- While trying to reason what to do that would be best for Mary, Gabriel visited him during his sleep and informed him that Mary had been chosen by God to be the mother of the promised Messiah and that Mary had not been unfaithful to him. It was alright to go ahead with the marriage.
- Who could argue with an angel of God? Joseph then reasoned that the best thing to do was to proceed with the marriage in spite

of all the gossip and advice to divorce.

VI. ANGELS SPOKE LOUDLY IN PRAISE

- Angels are servants of God and they are not little babies with wings nor are they blond, long haired women with wings and harps.

Their very appearance brings every human who sees them, to their knees in fear.

- Sometimes angels bring death and destruction, sometimes protection, and sometimes messages from God.
- On this occasion they were sent with a message: "The Messiah has been born."
- Not only did the angels deliver their message, but they began to lift up their voices in praise and frightened those to whom they had brought the message. "Glory to God" the angels shouted.

VII. SHEPHERDS HAD TO GO TELL WHAT THEY HAD JUST EXPERIENCED

- Shepherds were not the most popular people. They didn't attend many religious services and were not dressed very well and smelled.
- It was to these people that God chose to bring the news of the Messiah being born, not the religious authorities, nor the wealthy.
- When the angels appeared the shepherds were scared to death, but once they settled down and heard the angels' message of the birth of the Messiah, they left at once to find the baby to see for themselves and to worship the promised one.
- Once they found the baby and worshipped him, they couldn't keep quiet and they scattered all around the town and countryside with the news that the Messiah had come.

VIII. SIMEON SANG A SONG OF PRAISE

- An old man worshipped in the temple every day and had once been told by God in a time of prayer that he would live to see the promised Messiah.
- When Mary and Joseph brought their eight day old son to the temple, he happened to be there and was drawn to this young couple.

Upon seeing the baby, he knew at once that this was the promised Messiah.

- Simeon began to sing and to hold the baby up and declare that "now he could die in peace for God had kept His Word, he had seen the Messiah.

IX. ANNA OFFERED SONGS OF THANKSGIVING

- Anna was an old woman (about 84) who lived in the temple, praying and fasting for the people of Israel.
- One day upon seeing and hearing a commotion, she went over and saw a young couple with a baby. As she looked at the baby she knew immediately that this was the promised one and she began to sing songs of praise and thanksgiving for God keeping His Word and sending the long awaited Messiah.

X. WISE MEN SPOKE IN ADORATION

- Babylonians, men of learning, representatives of their king, came to Jerusalem and asked about the coming of the promised Messiah for they had seen His star.
- Upon being brought before King Herod, the king inquired of his counselors and they advised him that Bethlehem was the promised place.
- The wise men then left for Bethlehem and saw the star again that they had first seen.
- They found Mary, Joseph, and the small child in a house and there they bowed before the child, worshipping him and gave gifts to him, then left without telling the king.

XI. HEROD SPOKE OUT IN ANGER

- Upon learning from the wise men and his counselors that a new king had been born, he asked the wise men to return and tell him where exactly they had found the young king so he could go and worship him also.
- Herod was fearful for his throne and would take all and any steps to keep it. When the wise men didn't return, he became angry and ordered every boy child under the age of two in Bethlehem and the area around it to be killed.

XII. JOHN PREACHED THAT THE MESSIAH HAD COME

- Although only six months old when the Messiah was born, it was John's voice that was heard years later that told the Christmas story.
- "Prepare ye the way.." "..the Messiah has come" were the words of John. "The King is coming." John was fulfilling his role as the forerunner of the Messiah. John preached God's message to get ready, be prepared, for the Messiah had come.

CONCLUSION:

- The Bible tells us all about the Christmas story, the REAL Christmas story.
- There were voices of surprise, of doubt, of excitement, of wonder, of admiration, of praise, of obedience, of anger, of thanksgiving.
- Where would your voice have been? Where is it today?
- Christmas is for YOU. It is God's gift to everyone who would have it. Tell everyone about it.