

“Preparing for Jesus”  
Selected Scripture

12/6-7/08

6 pm; 9 & 10:45 am

## **INTRODUCTION**

Have you ever been in a situation where you were certain you had communicated to someone very clearly, only to receive a very unexpected result?

“A middle-aged woman posted her Christmas wish list on the refrigerator for her husband to read. She wrote, very clearly, ‘*Get me something that will make me look sexy and beautiful.*’

“When Christmas rolled around she expected to open a package with some fancy lingerie inside. To her surprise, he gave her an exercise bike.” (Reader's Digest, December 1992, p. 28)

*A specific message was sent, but the result was unexpected.*

“One dark night at sea, the captain of a large naval vessel saw a light straight ahead, putting it on a collision course with his ship.

“He signaled, ‘Alter your course 10 degrees south.’

“The reply came back, ‘Alter *your* course 10 degrees north.’

“Not used to having his orders refused, the captain snapped back a terse response, ‘Alter your course 10 degrees south. I am a captain.’

“The reply came quickly: ‘Alter your course 10 degrees north. I am a seaman third-class.’

“Now the captain was furious. He signaled, ‘Alter your course 10 degrees south. *I am a battleship.*’

“The reply: ‘Alter your course 10 degrees north. *I am a lighthouse.*’”

*A specific message was sent, but the result was unexpected.*

The Christmas story has a similar theme ... God sent a specific message to His people, but the result was unexpected.

## **I. The Bible Predicted Jesus' Coming**

### **A. Jewish believers knew their Messiah was coming**

#### **1. They were told at the beginning of time**

Genesis 3:14-15 **“So the LORD God said to the serpent, ‘Because you have done this, “Cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. 15 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; He will crush your head, and you will strike His heel.”””**

2. They were told He would be a descendent of King David

John 7:42 **“Does not the Scripture say that the Christ will come from David’s family ...?”**

(see Matthew 1 and Luke 3:23-33 for Jesus’ human genealogy)

3. They were told the very location of the Messiah’s birth

In Matthew 2:2-6 We read that magi came from the east and asked King Herod, **“Where is the newborn King of the Jews? We have seen His star as it arose, and we have come to worship Him.’**

**3 Herod was deeply disturbed by their question, as was all of Jerusalem.**

**4 He called a meeting of the leading priests and teachers of religious law.**

**‘Where did the prophets say the Messiah would be born?’ he asked them.**

**5 ‘In Bethlehem,’ they said, ‘for this is what the prophet wrote:**

**6 “O Bethlehem of Judah, you are not just a lowly village in Judah, for a ruler will come from you Who will be the shepherd for My people Israel.”””**

4. They were told that the prophet Elijah would precede Messiah (cf. Malachi 4:5-6)

In Luke 1:17, an angel speaks to the father of John the Baptist about his son:

**“And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous - to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”**

John came preaching that the people should turn from their sins and prepare themselves for the Messiah’s coming. There was great anticipation.

5. And Jewish believers were expecting Messiah

One day John pointed out Jesus to some of his followers. Andrew followed Jesus, and then,

in John 1:41, we read that **“The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, ‘We have found the Messiah’ (that is, the Christ).”**

*And, in addition to this,*

**B. The Jewish believers of Jesus’ time desperately wanted their Messiah to come ... yesterday!**

- They had been conquered by the Romans and were living under their rule. They were an occupied state.
- Their own Jewish governmental leaders were corrupt. (Herod)
- Most of their religious leaders were corrupt and more interested in maintaining control over the Jewish people than caring for them spiritually and leading them according to God’s Word.

And they were anticipating what would happen when Messiah came:

Luke 4:18-19 **“The Spirit of the Lord is on Me, because He has anointed Me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”**

They desperately wanted Him to come ...

*They had knowledge from the Scriptures and they had need, but still,*

**C. They were surprised when He came**

1. Mary was surprised when an angel came to her and told her she was chosen to give birth to the Messiah and that she would be supernaturally impregnated ... no man, just the creative power of God.
2. Mary’s fiance, Joseph, was surprised when Mary became pregnant and he knew he wasn’t the father!
3. Joseph was surprised, again, when an angel spoke to him in a dream, telling him that the baby in Mary was the Son of God.

*They couldn’t understand how Isaiah 7:14 could apply to Messiah: “The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call Him Immanuel.” (God with us)*

4. Joseph and Mary were surprised when God moved through the Roman governor to order a census that required them to go to **Bethlehem** ... the very location predicted for Messiah's birth ... where she gave birth to Jesus.

5. Herod was surprised when he heard from the Magi that the star of Messiah had appeared in the sky, and that He had been born. (Numbers 24:17 **"I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near. A star will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel."**)

6. The religious leaders of the Jews were surprised because Jesus didn't come as a conquering hero to free them from the Romans. So, they rejected Him. Jesus didn't meet their expectations, so they rejected Him.

They pressured the Roman governor, Pilate, to crucify Jesus. But, three days later He came to life in that same crucified body and appeared to more than 500 people over a 40-day period.

7. That's also a part that surprised everyone. They hadn't understood the Scriptures that first the Messiah had to die for the sins of their nation and the world, and three days later rise from death. THEN, after the Message about Jesus was spread through the whole Earth, THEN, He would come a second time to rule as King over all the Earth.

God had communicated clearly, the people had heard it, but still they received something other than what they expected.

In a few weeks we will be celebrating the birth of Jesus. It is still relevant for our lives. Through Jesus the doors of Heaven have been opened for all those who will entrust their lives to Him.

That is worth celebrating!

And that first coming of Jesus has laid the foundation for His second coming.

So, as we celebrate the birth of Jesus, the Bible tells us to be prepared for His second coming.

## **II. Be Prepared for Jesus' Second Coming**

### **A. We know that Jesus is coming!**

#### **1. He will come from the sky**

Acts 1:9-11 **"After He said this, He was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid Him from their sight.**

**10 They were looking intently up into the sky as He was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them.**

11 **‘Men of Galilee,’ they said, ‘why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, Who has been taken from you into Heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen Him go into Heaven.’**”

2. He will come at the end of this era

In Acts 2:14-21, when the gift of the Holy Spirit was given to the Apostles, people were confused as to what is happening.

14 **“Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: ‘Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say.**

16 **... this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:**

17 **“In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people ...”**”

The last days began at that time, about 30 A.D. The time in which we are living is the last era of time before Jesus’ return to earth.

3. He will defeat the devil and his followers

Revelation 20:10 **“And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.”**

4. There will be judgment for every person who has ever lived

Revelation 20:11a, 12, 14-15 **“Then I saw a great white throne and Him Who was seated on it ...**

12 **And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books.**

14 **Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death.**

15 **If anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.”**

B. We want Jesus to come

Wouldn’t you love to see an end to war, murders, senseless crimes, peoples’ lives being destroyed by drugs and alcohol abuse, an end to the abuse of helpless children and the elderly ...

... wouldn't you love to have an end to temptation and the presence of sin?

At the very end of the Bible, after John has written down everything that will happen in the last days, and how Jesus will come and remove all evil, sin, pain, mourning and tears ...

... he cries out, in the next to the last verse in the Bible, **“Come, Lord Jesus.”**  
(Revelation 22:20b)

And in spite of all that we know and our great desire to see Jesus return,

### C. We will be surprised when Jesus comes

Matthew 24:44 **“So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect Him.”**

Matthew 25:13 **“Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.”**

Even though we will be surprised by the timing of Jesus' return, Jesus tells us to keep watch for the signs He has given, and to be ready.

## III. How To Be Ready for Jesus' Return

### A. Enter into a relationship with God

John 1:12 **“Yet to all who received Him (Jesus), to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God.”**

Acts 3:19-21 **“Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord,  
20 and that He may send the Christ, Who has been appointed for you - even Jesus.  
21 He must remain in Heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as He promised long ago through His holy prophets.”**

### B. Live a life centered on Jesus

Spend time with Him in His Word, in prayer, in worship.

Walk with Him in obedience, and when you sin, admit it and ask for forgiveness.

Look to His Word for guidance in every area of life.

Live with Him in *a relationship*, trusting Him, believing Him, walking with Him.

When Sharon and I were dating, we were Christians. We began a relationship and it grew closer and closer. We focused our relationship on the Lord. We prayed together, talked about His Word, and followed His ways in how we conducted ourselves.

There was one big issue ... I was afraid of getting married. One day Sharon asked me if our relationship was going to lead to marriage. She was 25 and needed to know. It was a fair question. I responded by breaking up with her.

After spending one week in misery, I went back to her and said, "I'm willing to consider marriage. That's all I can offer right now. Is that enough?" She said, "Yes, that's all I've wanted is for you to be willing to consider it."

So, I started identifying my fears regarding marriage, studying what the Bible said about it, praying, and decided she was the one for me. I went out and bought a ring, and when I proposed to her, she was completely surprised. She knew I was considering it, but she didn't know what my conclusion would be or when she would hear it.

The relationship we have with God is much better than that. He has told us that those that enter a relationship with Him (through faith in Jesus), He immediately adopts them into His forever family ... now and for all eternity. No guessing, no wondering.

So, when Jesus returns, we'll be surprised, but we'll also be ready, knowing what lies ahead.

## **CONCLUSION**

God has spoken to us clearly. Let's do what He told us. And, when we are surprised by the timing of His return, we will be ready to see Him!

**John 20:31 "... these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name."**

*"Father in Heaven, thank You for the assurance You give for eternity to all who entrust their lives to Jesus Christ. I ask You to forgive my sins, my self-centeredness, and I ask Jesus to enter my life as my King and Lord. Thank You for hearing me and answering! In Jesus' name, Amen."*