

“Do You Hear What I Hear?”

December 18, 2016

Isaiah 43:19- *See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.*

CORE: The Christmas story clearly illustrates the importance of PERCEPTION. Some of the people perceived and received the blessing of beholding the Son of God in the flesh. While others missed His arrival.

1. Those who MISSED

Isaiah 6:9- *He said, “Go and tell this people: “Be ever hearing, but never understanding; be ever seeing, but never perceiving.’*

- **The Inn Keeper**- While his business was booming—he missed the greatest transaction of all time!
- **Joseph’s family**- Because of the census, Joseph had to return to the city of his birth, where his family lived. They missed the greatest family blessing of all time!
- **Herod**- Fearful that his own two sons would try to take his throne, he had them killed. He was equally afraid of the birth of another king (Matthew 2:3), later attempting to kill the Messiah (along with all baby boys under age 2).
- **Religious leaders**- (Matthew 2:4-6) They quoted Micah 5:2, knowing exactly where Messiah Jesus was to be born—yet they refused to walk a few miles south of Jerusalem to see him. A classic example of knowing “about” Jesus—without seeking to truly “know Jesus.”

2. Those who PERCEIVED. (Luke 2:1-20)

- **Joseph & Mary**- Through angelic visitations and prophetic dreams, these two tenderhearted people saw the glory of the Lord in the face of Jesus. From the humble reception—“be it unto me, as You have said”—to the willingness to risk their reputations, even their own lives, they perceived and received the revelation of God.
- **The Shepherds**- The only time shepherds were allowed to be “nearby” a city was when they were watching the Passover lambs. That night these humble shepherds saw the face of the Lamb of God who would lay His own life down for the sins of the world—the Sacrifice to end all sacrifices!
- **Simeon**- (Luke 2:25-35)
- **Anna**- (Luke 2:36-38)

NOTE: Spiritual perception not only opens our awareness of what God is doing—it also alerts us to the schemes of the enemy. (We need both!)

- A year or so after Jesus' birth, Joseph was warned by an angel in a dream to flee to Egypt to escape Herod's plan to kill Jesus (Matthew 2:13).
- In the same way, the Magi, who had come from the east to worship Jesus, were warned in a dream to leave Jerusalem immediately (Matthew 2:12).

APPLICATION:

1. **You have good ears. (John 10:27- "*My sheep know My voice.*")**
2. **You will increase in your perception of God's heart and His will. (Romans 12:2 NLT- "*Let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.*")**
3. **You will also increase in your perception of the enemy's schemes. (NOTE: According to 2 Corinthians 2:10-11, extending forgiveness to others keeps us in the place of being so "**aware of Satan's schemes**" that he will not be able to "**exploit, outsmart, outwit, or take advantage of us.**")**
4. **You will overcome fear (Luke 1:74,75). (NOTE: The carol "Do You Hear What I Hear?" was written in 1962 by a gifted musical couple—during the Cuban Missile Crisis and the threat of nuclear war. Hearing His voice causes us to experience "His goodness and light.")**
5. **ALL of this is possible by the Holy Spirit!**

*"No eye has seen, no ear has heard,
and no mind has imagined
what God has prepared
for those who love him."
But it was to us that God revealed these things by his Spirit.
For his Spirit searches out everything
and shows us God's deep secrets." (1 Corinthians 2:9-10)*