

Tusculum Hills Baptist Church
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AFTER THEY ENCOUNTERED JESUS, THEN WHAT?

Luke 2; Matthew 2

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I have four sections to my message today:

- What happened after the shepherds encountered Jesus?
- What happened after Simeon encountered Jesus?
- What happened after Anna encountered Jesus?
- What happened after the Magi encountered Jesus?

INTRODUCTION: During our Sundays when we recall the birth of Jesus, we focus on the circumstances around his birth such as the journey to Nazareth for the census required by the Roman government, the swaddling clothes, the manger. We look at the spiritual things such as a virgin carrying a child conceived of the Holy Spirit, and angels that appeared to Joseph and the shepherds. All of our studies about the birth of Jesus tend to lean toward the anticipation of his birth and then the birth itself.

Today, I want to look at what happened after people met Jesus right after his birth - the shepherds, Simeon, Anna, and the Magi. Before I do that, however, I want to point out a pattern that I have never before noticed. All of these characters had an introduction to Jesus, an encounter with him, and then experiences afterwards.

- Before the shepherds met Jesus, he sent angels to announce his birth.
- Before Simeon met Jesus, the Holy Spirit gave him a promise.
- Before Anna met Jesus, we do not have record of a specific revelation like the shepherds and Simeon had, but we believe she had knowledge the redeemer was coming, as we will read about.
- Before the Magi met Jesus, they had the revelation of the star. How they knew about the star we do not know exactly. There are several theories out there. Perhaps they had a copy of the scriptures and had studied Numbers, Chapter

24 which mentions the star in a prophecy. This is an example of people outside of the traditional family of faith, who were included in the family of faith.

So let me repeat the pattern:

All these people had an introduction to Jesus – they learned, by God’s grace, of his birth.

They had an encounter with Jesus.

Then they had experiences after that encounter. That’s what I’m talking about today. Let’s see what we can learn.

1 - WHAT HAPPENED AFTER THE SHEPHERDS ENCOUNTERED JESUS?

SCRIPTURE: Luke 2:16-20

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

What happened after the shepherds encountered Jesus? Did you catch it?

- They shared the good news.
- And they returned to their work glorifying and praising God.

2 – WHAT HAPPENED AFTER SIMEON MET JESUS?

SCRIPTURE: Luke 2:25-33

Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. ²⁶ It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. ²⁷ Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, ²⁸ Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying:

²⁹ *“Sovereign Lord, as you have promised,
you may now dismiss your servant in peace.*

³⁰ *For my eyes have seen your salvation,*

³¹ *which you have prepared in the sight of all nations:*

³² *a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
and the glory of your people Israel.”*

³³ *The child’s father and mother marveled at what was said about him. ³⁴ Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: “This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, ³⁵ so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too.”*

Again, what happened after Simeon met Jesus?

- Simeon embraced Jesus.
- Also, Simeon praised God.
- Another thing he did: Simeon acknowledged God’s promise to him had been fulfilled.
- And yet another thing: Simeon prophesied.

3 – WHAT HAPPENED AFTER ANNA MET JESUS?

SCRIPTURE: Luke 2:36-38

There was also a prophet, Anna, the daughter of Penuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. ³⁸ Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.

- Anna thanked God.
- Also, she witnessed. But not just to anyone. She witnessed to Jews, but not just any Jews. She witnessed to those looking forward to redemption. She had a targeted witnessing strategy.

4 – WHAT HAPPENED AFTER THE MAGI SAW JESUS?

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 2:7-12

Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. ⁸ He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.”

⁹ After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. ¹¹ On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. ¹² And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

Again, what happened after the Magi saw Jesus?

- The Magi bowed down and worshipped him.
- Next, they opened their treasures.
- And finally, they had spiritual direction for a new earthly direction. I could preach on that point alone for quite a while.

Now let me summarize all these experiences. It’s easy to do because we have recurring themes. In-person with Jesus, we see worship, praise, gratitude, sacrificial giving, and even prophecy.

After leaving Jesus, we see a broad witnessing strategy with the shepherds, a targeted witnessing strategy with Anna, and what I called “spiritual direction for a new earthly direction” for the Magi.

APPLICATION: Now, how do I reign this in so that we have truth relevant for today? Easy peasy:

When you encounter Jesus:

- You should worship him. You should praise him. You should thank him. You should give sacrificially. And while there is debate over whether the gift of

prophecy still exists or not, I can clearly say that prophecy in terms of declaring truth is alive and well.

- If you claim to be a follower of Jesus and do not worship him, do not praise him, do not give sacrificially, or do not declare the truth, then there is a huge spiritual problem in your life.
- And like the Magi, when you encounter Jesus, you may have spiritual direction for a new earthly direction, just as the Magi were warned in a dream to go travel a different way than they had planned.

ILLUSTRATION: This week I had two conversations, one in-person and one online. The one in-person was with a fellow believer who will be moving with his family overseas. This man told me he is pretty much obsessed with only doing what God wants him to do. He had been in prayer for quite some time over the possibility of this overseas job.

The other conversation was with a man online. This is a particular man who I've followed because of his entertaining daredevil stunts. He argued on his social media that there is no God, and he was pretty angry about it. I engaged him somewhat but did not linger there. If he responds to my last post, I'll likely continue the conversation, as long as he is civil.

So here are two people, both men, both Americans. One seeking spiritual direction for his earthly direction and the other seeking no direction and doing whatever he wants.

In the one seeking spiritual direction for his earthly direction, I see humility, sincerity, and joy in his life. In the one living for himself, I see pride, arrogance, and anger.

Let's do this as we end the year and move into the next: Let's worship the Lord, praise him, and thank him. Let's give sacrificially. Let's witness. Let's declare the truth, and let's seek divine direction for our earthly journey.

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I use the NIV translation of scripture because of its conversational nature. Feel free to go to Bible Gateway and copy and paste whichever translation you want to use. This transcript has been edited to an outline format that improves readability and therefore may not exactly follow the video edition.

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Sincerely, Paul Gunn
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