

People Who Were Ready for Christ's Coming: Part 2

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of being ready for Christ's coming by following God's voice, being humble and sincere, and seeking to express His body on earth.

Duration: 57:42

Scripture: Matthew 28:19, Mark 16:15, Luke 2:26, John 7:37

Topics: "Second Coming"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the story of the shepherds in Luke chapter 2 and how they were simple and nameless individuals who were ready for the coming of the Lord. The preacher emphasizes that God takes note of sincere and humble people, even if they are not gifted or famous. He also mentions the example of Simeon, who was looking for the redemption of Jerusalem and found it in Jesus. The preacher challenges the listeners to examine their own hearts and asks if they are among those who are ready for the coming of Christ. He warns that with increased knowledge and exposure to God's word, there is a greater responsibility to obey it.

Transcript

We were looking last time at some of the people who knew about the birth of Jesus, the first coming of Christ, and we tried to learn from their example how to be ready for the second coming of Christ. You know the vast majority of people in Israel, though they read their Bibles and many of them are great scholars in the Bible, and they went to their Sabbath synagogues, the synagogues every Sabbath just like most Christians go to church every Sunday, but 99.9% of them and more didn't have a clue when Jesus was born. I didn't even know about it.

They didn't even know who he was. And it's going to be like that with a lot of Christians. They think, they know the Bible, they go to meetings, they sing and they praise and they worship, but they're not ready for the coming of Christ.

But the Lord revealed that to Zacharias and Elizabeth that they're gonna have a son who's going to be the forerunner for the coming of Christ. And we saw how he, they were an old couple, and then he revealed to a young girl called Mary and a young man called Joseph. There's no difference between old and young.

We can be ready for the coming of Christ. But there were certain qualities we saw in Zacharias and Elizabeth that made God reveal to them and in Joseph and Mary that made God reveal to them something he could not reveal to all the others. And that's what we saw last time.

So we want to look further at some other people to whom the Lord revealed that birth of Jesus. These other people knew about the birth of Jesus before he was born. But now we look at some people in Luke chapter 2 to whom the Lord to God revealed the birth of Jesus after he was born.

And from them also we can learn something of God's ways. How God, with God there is no partiality. All people are the same to him and we will see that very clearly.

Some people think God cares only for the poor. Some people think God cares only for the rich. Both are wrong.

God cares for both of them. There were extremely poor people who came to see Jesus and there were extremely wealthy people, millionaires, who also came and worshiped Jesus. And there were old people like we saw last time and young people.

There were men, there were women. And it's wonderful to see how right at that time of the birth of Christ, God has shown his absolute impartiality. Men, women, young, old, rich, poor, makes no difference.

There were all types of people who came to know of the birth of Jesus. So it's going to be like that in the last days. That there will be young and old and men and women and rich and poor who will be ready.

But there'll be a very, very small number. That's the point. So here in Luke chapter 2, we read about some shepherds.

We are familiar with the story in verse 8. In the same region, there were some shepherds staying in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them. And the glory of the Lord shone before them.

In verse 10, the angel said to them, don't be afraid. For I'm bringing you good news of great joy, which will be for all the people. For today in the city of David, there's been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

This will be a sign for you. You'll find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger. And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly hosts, saying, Glory to God in the highest, and earth peace among men with whom he is pleased.

And when the angels had gone away, the shepherds began to say, let's go straight to Bethlehem then and see this thing that has happened. See, they were looking after sheep. They were out there faithfully doing their job.

They were poor people. They were not great scholars. People would have looked down upon them and despised them.

You know, they were employed by some rich man, perhaps, who employed them to look after sheep. And they were doing that job faithfully at night. And the angel appeared to them.

There must have been something in their heart, though they were simple people, that God saw. They were not preachers. If you put them in a pulpit, they would probably stumble even two, three minutes.

They didn't know what to say. But there must have been something in their heart that God saw. They were not gifted.

They were not famous. In fact, we don't even know their names. These are some of those nameless people who will be ready for the coming of the Lord.

Simple people who have no gift of speaking, who would stumble if they stand in a pulpit in two or three minutes. But in whose heart? Maybe some of you are like that. In whose heart the Lord sees a longing after Him? Maybe others look at you and don't think you're very spiritual because you don't have the marks of religious people, always talking about the Bible and scholarly, etc.

These were simple people. You may be like that. And I want to say to you, here is a word to you that God takes note of such people.

If they have a sincerity and a humility, they don't think high thoughts about themselves, and they don't even expect that anything special will happen to them. And yet for 2,000 years people have been talking about them. That's how God rewards faithfulness among very simple, ordinary, poor people.

What can we learn from them? One thing I would say, that when this angel appeared, and there was a whole host of angels saying this, they didn't say, hey I don't believe all this. Let's go and check with some of the scholars whether this any such thing is supposed to happen. When God spoke to them, it says immediately, they said in verse 15, let us go straight to Bethlehem and see this thing that the Lord has made known to us.

It's one quality I see in them. When they knew God had spoken, they did not consult with flesh and blood. They obeyed immediately.

See these are, there are certain type of believers like that. As I said, they're not great scholars. They can't speak in any great way.

They're probably poor, simple, but they have this quality that when they know God wants them to do something, they do it. Even if others are not doing it. It doesn't matter if other people are going to Bethlehem or not.

The greatest event in the history of the world was happening in Bethlehem and nobody knew about it. There should have been a great rush over there, but nobody was going, but they said we go. God shown it to us and we're not bothered whether other people are doing it or not.

And that's the type of thing brothers and sisters, that'll make sure that you're ready for the coming of Christ. That when you know that God has spoken something, you know, if you're not sure, you know, there are many things where we're not sure whether that's God or whether it's our own voice. And certainly if somebody else tell you, tells you that said the Lord, you've got to put a hundred question marks on that.

But if you yourself are sure in your heart that that's really God, especially if you see it in his word, you have don't have any doubt at all. See those days people didn't have a Bible like this to be absolutely sure what God has spoken. So God spoke to them in external ways and God spoke to Abraham.

It was in a vision and many many people like that. In days, you know, God always wanted to speak to people and when he when he knew that people didn't have a printed Bible with them, there was a need for that type of external revelation. We don't have so much in those these days because God's given us his word.

So we got plenty. I mean if you want to hear God speaking, you can hear God speaking to you every day. But it's up to you.

It's there in your home and you can read it. You don't have to wait for an angel from heaven. Today there are lots of people who claim that angels appear to them.

Most of them I'll tell you are Satan appearing as an angel of light because of one difference. I'll tell you what, when the angel appeared to these people, they didn't testify about it to anybody. They didn't tell people, hey let's go and tell folks at home we've seen an angel.

They didn't wait for the next meeting to talk about the angel they saw. No, they went to see Jesus. Now I'll tell you something else.

After they met Jesus, this is how you know whether these people who talk about angels are in the same category of these shepherds because a lot most of the people who talk about seeing angels today are hoaxes of the first order and I hope you will remember that. I'll tell you why, because these folks saw angels and they did not talk about the angels. They went straight to Jesus and we read that when they saw Jesus, it says here in verse 17, when they had seen this they made known the statement which had been told them about this child and all who heard it wondered.

They did not talk about the angels, they talked about the child Jesus and I know whether God has spoken to you or not. You'll talk about Jesus. You won't talk about yourself, you won't talk about your experiences, you won't even talk about being taken up to the third heaven.

Paul was taken up to the third heaven and he never spoke about it for 14 years. We read in 2nd Corinthians 12 and even then he said it only just to prove to these guys who just wouldn't believe him that he was indeed an apostle. There was a need for that because those days there was no Bible and he needed them to know that what he was writing was Scripture.

So Paul must and he says even then he says I'm not permitted to speak about the things I saw. There was a godly man. If a man tells me he was taken up to the third heaven and doesn't speak about it in the next meeting, like most people would, but waits 14 years and even then is very reluctant to speak about it and still doesn't tell us what he saw, I'd believe him.

But these guys who tell us that they went to heaven and saw Moses and David and talked to them, I don't believe one bit. And if you're wise you wouldn't believe them either. So these people talked about Jesus and that's very important for us to know because in the last days there's going to be a lot of deception.

People say the angels appeared to the shepherds and appeared to us but whom did the shepherds talk about? That's my question. Now who do you talk about? You talk about the angel. They talked about Jesus.

It's a very simple way to find out. Jesus said I if I be lifted up will draw all men unto me. So they went around talking about him.

The other thing I want you to see here is, you know this chapter begins with a decree, verse 1, that went out from Caesar Augustus. Caesar Augustus was the greatest man, humanly speaking, on the face of the earth at that time. He was, there was only one superpower, Rome, and he was the king.

But God didn't reveal anything to him. It's very interesting to see this. About five, seven hundred years earlier Micah had prophesied that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem.

That is a clear prophecy. But Joseph and Mary were living in Nazareth. How is Jesus going to be born in Bethlehem? It's very interesting.

You know today if you go into the villages of India and particularly a few hundred years ago when transportation was more difficult, I know even the days of my own grandfather or earlier ancestors and all of yours too, if a man came from a village you can be almost 100% certain that his father, grandfather, great grandfather, and all his ancestors were in that village. Because people didn't move around. That's true even today in many other remote villages of India.

And so if Joseph and Mary were in Nazareth, the chances are 99.999999% that Jesus would be born in Nazareth. But the Bible says, but the prophecy was he has to be born in Bethlehem. How in the world is God going to do it? I mean the Lord could have looked around for some young girl who lived in Bethlehem but there wasn't any, like Mary.

And the one girl he found suitable to be the mother of his son was not in Bethlehem, it was in Nazareth. Okay, nothing impossible for God. He makes Caesar, now listen to this, he makes the the greatest power on earth to issue an order, which I think is a pretty stupid order, that when you take a census of the people, now when you want, you know, to take a census of the people, we take census of people in India, you don't tell everybody to go to the place where you were born before you take a census.

And can you imagine if the government of India placed and made an order like that? All of you go to the place where you were born and we'll take the census from there. That government would be overthrown in a few days, that's crazy. Can you imagine the confusion that'll be in this country? Just think of it, you got to think about these things when you read this.

Caesar gives one of the craziest orders I've ever heard, one of the stupidest orders I've, nobody probably ever did before or after because of one reason, and the reason was the godliest woman on earth at that time, young girl, was found in Nazareth and she had to go to Bethlehem for Jesus to be born. Do you know the power of God? You're afraid of what your boss will tell you? You got to learn something from these places. When you're on God's side, when God is on your side, he'll move heaven and earth to show his support for you.

I've seen that through many many years in my life. The eyes of the Lord are not looking for those whose hearts are totally his. 2nd Chronicles 16 9 says he already knows those whose hearts are totally his but his eyes are moving around the earth to see how can I support this man, this woman, over here, over there, over in the other place.

How can I support them? How can I get Mary to Bethlehem to, for my son to be born? Okay, if Caesar has to give a crazy order, he'll do it. So he said the census is to be taken and this is the first census when Quirinius, Quirinius the governor of Syria, God didn't bother about him, he didn't know that what is happening and everyone, listen to this, everyone who's on his way to register for the census, each to his

own city, Joseph went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth because, I mean Joseph himself may have been born in Nazareth but his ancestor David was down there from the city of Bethlehem so he had to go back to his hometown, you know, and be there and then only they'd take a census to register along with Mary and that's how they went. And how did these shepherds identify Jesus? There's only one sign they gave.

The angel said to the shepherds, this will be the sign for you, verse 12, you'll find a baby wrapped in cloths, every baby is wrapped in cloths. Now probably many babies born that night in Bethlehem, that's not a sign but this baby is going to be found in the eating trough of a cow shed. You'll never find another baby like that in Bethlehem.

All the other babies will be born in more convenient surroundings but there'll be one baby, the shepherds go looking around, it's not difficult for them, they'll just look for the cow sheds. Go to Bethlehem and look for all the cow sheds and see, look into the trough, there's no baby here, look into another trough, there's no baby here, finally they come to a cow shed but there's a baby lying in a trough which is meant for the animals to eat. The most unusual thing, I wonder if in the history of the world any beggar gave birth to their baby in a cow shed.

There's something I learned there about Jesus. When he was born he became the lowest of the low because he came underneath people. That's the only way you can lift somebody up.

I'll tell you something, you can't lift a person up if you don't go underneath him. That's the way he lifted humanity up by getting underneath the lowest of the low and lifted them all up to heaven, those who wanted to go to heaven. That's why Almighty God, when he planned from all eternity the birth of his son, you know many of you when you have babies going to be born, how you plan for it and you plan which hospital and you make a selection and so many things.

We have noticed only only a few months to prepare. Almighty God had time from eternity from the creation of Adam thousands of years to plan the exact place the birth of his son. You think it would have been difficult for God to keep an empty room for Mary in some hotel in Bethlehem if you got thousands of years to plan for it? You can book a whole room in a hotel even without thousands of years.

No, God planned it such that because of this rush of the census there'd be no rooms available in Bethlehem. Otherwise there'd have been plenty of room. A lot of people were turning up for the census and I have a feeling that God made that donkey carrying Mary slow down a bit so that it wouldn't reach when a room was available.

It would reach when the last room was gone because in God's wonderful plan he had to deflate the pride of people who think greatness is in big buildings and wealth and pomp and show and show them that Almighty God when he came to earth as a baby would be born in a cow shed among the animals. Have you learned something from that? Jesus needed to die for our sins but at least why couldn't he die a decent death? Why this horrible humiliating death where you hang in your underwear before your whole crowd of people in the most horrible way of killing that man has ever invented, crucifixion. That was God's plan too that he had to die in the most humiliating way that any human being was ever put to death.

He had to get underneath everybody in birth and in death. So you'll find the angels told shepherds the way you'll identify this baby is different from all other babies. It's going to be found in a cow shed.

Now what do we learn from this? I'm not saying that you got to get your babies born in a cow shed. That's not the principle. We got to learn principles from Scripture not try to literally follow something.

The principle is this. That was the first manifestation of the body of Christ on this earth. The physical body of Christ.

Today there's a spiritual body of Christ. Where do you think you'll find the spiritual body of Christ today? Not in the big cathedrals and huge auditoriums with thirty forty thousand people. Not likely.

It'll be in some small place, probably despised, some little house where two or three people are meeting together because they love Jesus and want to be an expression of his body on earth. That's the principle I learned from Jesus being born in a stable. So people are looking for the big and the great will miss the body of Christ.

You see that's the mistake the wise men made later on. They went to Herod's palace thinking oh king of the Jews got to be born there. They were mistaken.

The shepherds were not mistaken because I mean when the angels told them this baby is going to be found in a cow shed in the eating trough of the cows they could have said that can't be the body of Christ Almighty God being born in a cow shed. It can't be. This must be fake.

No. They believed it. How many people have eyes to see today that the birth of the body of Christ in a town maybe with three or four people meeting in a small house.

I think most people don't have that idea. They wouldn't believe it. They think that can't be the body of Christ.

The body of Christ must be some big huge thing. So there are a lot of things we can learn from the shepherds in the way they obeyed these and and you know we don't know who they are but I'm sure they became believers and we'll see them in heaven. Praise God for their example.

I want to now move on to another example of a man who knew about the birth of Christ. You read in verse 23 there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. Now this is an old man.

God makes no distinction between the young shepherds and the old Simeon. And this man was righteous and devout looking for the consolation of Israel. See this is the type of person who God reveals himself to.

That when they are old they're not waiting to die. Some old people are like that. Oh Lord I've had enough of living on this earth.

I want to die. I tell you if I live to be a 90 I will not want to die. I'll wait for the coming of Christ.

You know that song we sing it is well with my soul one line goes the sky not the grave is our goal. What's your goal? To be raptured with Jesus even if you're a hundred years old or you say oh Lord I've had enough of this earth I want to go. I don't want to go.

I want to be raptured. Paul said that we who are alive. He said in 1 Thessalonians 4 we not you or those we 1 Thessalonians 4 we who are alive will be taken up to be with the Lord.

Paul expected to be raptured in his lifetime until a few months or weeks before he was going to be killed. The Lord said to him no Paul I have many more names in the book of life who have to be saved and you're not going to live till then. I'm glad Jesus didn't come in the first century aren't you? I certainly am.

So Paul you got to die.

So he says in 2nd Timothy 4 okay I'm not going to be alive the Lord shown me my time is over I'm gonna go but until that the Lord showed him that he said I'm I'm waiting for the coming of the Lord and I want to say to all of you in Jesus name don't look for death don't fear death look for the coming of Christ I promise you I'll be an example to that even if I live to be a hundred I will not look for death I will not fear death I've looked for the coming of Jesus Christ my Lord from heaven yeah he was waiting this was an old man and such people the Holy Spirit was upon him do you long that the Holy Spirit will be upon you and the Holy Spirit's upon you you're ready for the coming of Christ and you don't have to be a great spiritual person for the Holy Spirit to be upon you I'll tell you

two simple things if you keep your conscience clear but three let me say three things if you keep your conscience clear that's very important you know the Holy Spirit's picture like a dove a dove can be frightened away by a little noise and there's a picture there the Holy Spirit just hates sin his name is Holy Spirit and anything defiled in your spirit you don't forgive somebody you watch some internet pornography you have a wrong attitude to it someone you spoke some wrong word and you didn't apologize for it brother it's that easy for the Spirit of God not for you to be lost but the Spirit of God won't be upon you anymore I fear that I feared it so much that I've said Lord you can take away everything I have but I don't want the Holy Spirit to go away from me never I value more than

house property land even health you can take everything but if you value the Holy Spirit like that the Holy Spirit will show you things which other Christians never see the Holy Spirit is upon him and it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit you see when the Holy Spirit's upon a person he reveals things to him which other people don't know there were great scholars in Israel how is it Simeon knew something which the others didn't know they read the same Old Testament they had the same Bible Genesis to Malachi but Simeon got a revelation from the Spirit seek for such a life the New Testament begins like this with men who had a revelation from the Spirit it ends with John and revelation also who had revelation from the Spirit and it was revealed to him by the Holy Spirit just like

Paul was told you're not going to live to the Lord's coming Simeon was told you will not die till you see the birth of the Messiah now I believe he had a longing for it and that's the other thing good conscience secondly humility God's Holy Spirit rests upon humble people three things I told you one keep a good conscience second always humble yourself and third have a great thirst in your heart you said if you thirst come to me for the Holy Spirit to be upon you that's all if you keep those three things in mind I guarantee you love the Holy Spirit upon you all the time a good conscience humility and a thirst for the Holy Spirit do you have that you'll be ready for the coming of the Lord the Holy Spirit will be upon you and he revealed to you things which others don't know I mean I'm only

preaching what I've tried to practice I've tried my best for many years now to keep my conscience clear even towards those who hurt and harm me I've tried my best to humble myself in whatever situation I see and I've tried to have a thirst for the whole power of the Holy Spirit I mean even today before I get up to speak I said Lord give me the gift of prophecy give me words according to the need of people we must live like that revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he wouldn't see death before he had seen the Messiah the

Lord's Christ and one day he came in the spirit into the temple you see something there brothers and sisters read the Bible slowly it's one of the exhortations I've been giving to people many places nowadays read the Bible slowly don't be in a hurry to go through the

Bible in one year it's much more important for the Bible to go through you a lot of people boast they've gone through the Bible 20 times 30 times I don't know I may have gone through the Bible only two or three times in the last 50 years that surprise you I'm more interested in the Bible going through me not all parts of Scripture are equally important don't think that's blasphemous to read the genealogies and one Chronicles is not as important as reading John 14 and 15 and 16 and 17 there's certain portions which are more important the truth is like a body there are certain parts of the body like the heart that are more important than the fingernails it's not that I don't want the fingernails I want all of it but the heart is more important than the fingernails certain parts of Scripture

more important than the others and that's why I devote myself more to certain parts of Scripture because I want to be ready for the coming of Christ I don't want to win a Bible quiz competition no I want the Bible to go through me so read it slowly he came in the spirit to the temple do you come in the spirit to the Sunday services or the Wednesday evening meetings I seek to do that you know you may never open your mouth let me give you an encouragement those of you who don't have the ability to speak when God is not given the ability to preach you can bless this church as much as I can you know how by coming in the spirit to a meeting I believe that I can come in the spirit to a meeting and be silent throughout the meeting and influence the spirit in that meeting according to your faith

be it unto you that's my faith I believe it will be according to my faith you know you can influence a meeting without opening your mouth shall I prove it to you now the way some ladies put perfume nowadays you can sit 10 feet away from it you get it haven't you felt that hey that's a lady approaching you mean the Holy Spirit's less powerful than some perfume invented in France or somewhere I don't believe that if you come in the spirit to a meeting you can influence the whole meeting remember that come in the spirit don't worry if you speak or not if you get an opportunity to share God's Word that'll be even wonderful you can bless the meeting I told you those three things remember that come in the spirit to every meeting he came in the spirit I said you know these are the people who are

ready for the coming of Christ these the people whom God revealed something he said you're gonna see Jesus before you die he came in the spirit and every day the babies being brought into the temple from because there was only one temple in all of Israel it's not just the babies born in Jerusalem from all over Israel on the eighth day babies had to be circumcised and on the 40th day after they're born they had to be presented in the temple and there's not just one babies not just Joseph and Mary coming with Jesus there was so many parents bringing their children babies on the 40th day to keep the law to present them to the Lord how do you think Simeon identified Jesus he did not have any halo around his head like all these false pictures we see he looked just like any other baby Joseph

and Mary were very poorly dressed and very poor people and in the midst of the crowd the Holy Spirit says go there go to that person Jesus is there I prayed that type of prayer many times in the last years I say Lord lead me to people who want Jesus was seeking a God-fearing life lead me to such people by the Spirit in your own way we've taught elders in our churches to pray Lord if there's someone seeking a God-fearing life in this area we're not talking about every Tom Dick and Harry no we're not interested we're not interested in church growth of people who just come to be namesake Christians there are two commands Jesus gave go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature and when you go into

all nations make them disciples is the second part of it which is not being

obeyed and that's what I want to do make disciples so we're not saying Lord show us all the people who want to go to heaven there are millions who want to go to heaven show us all the people who want to be rich who want God to bless them Jesus to heal them there are millions like that but Lord show me the people who want to follow Jesus who want to learn from him who want to be humble like him who want to be holy like him who want to love their enemies like he loved and who want to have divine nature Lord lead me to one person like that any day I'd rather choose that than meet a thousand people who want to be healed of their sicknesses or who want to go to heaven no there's sometimes I thank God that he never gave me a gift of healing I think a whole lot of wrong type of people would have

be attracted to me I prayed for it many times not said no it's not my calling for you it's one of the gifts and now I understand why Paul said if you ever seek for a gift seek for prophecy not for healing I can understand that but there it is you know the Holy Spirit led Simeon to that one God-fearing couple in the midst of many another God-fearing man and how the Holy Spirit brings them together I've seen that happen in the last 25 30 years in different parts of the world in amazing ways once when I missed a bus and got on the wrong bus lo and behold I come in touch with some young man who's now leading one of our churches in Kerala if you have a longing if you have a longing Lord lead me to God-fearing people I don't mind missing a bus to be the God-fearing person Lord lead me to some

God-fearing person I want to build fellowship with people I want to encourage them to build little fellowships here and there and we've seen that happen so here these two are brought together the Spirit showed him this is Jesus and he took Jesus into his arms in verse 29 he blessed God and said Lord no you're releasing your bond servant to depart in peace I've at last seen I have no doubt this little baby who looks like any other ordinary baby this is Jesus this is the Messiah you need a revelation from heaven to know that Jesus Christ is the only way to heaven that all religions do not lead to God I never argue with people about that I mean if somebody had argued with Simeon hey this looks just like any other that baby is also the same that baby's also isn't that baby Simeon wouldn't

argue with them I don't believe in arguing with people no never you'll never get me into an argument it's a matter of revelation how could Simeon explain to these people who got no revelation who got don't have the Holy Spirit upon them this is Jesus man how can I explain to people when I say to them this is the body of Christ not that I wouldn't argue this is a matter of revelation how do you know one group of people is really seeking to please God when there are thousands of groups that call themselves Christians I say how can I be led to the place where God wants me to be you got to have the Holy Spirit upon you and I told you those three conditions so Lord this is your this is your I know this is it this is it this is the Son of God I have my eyes have seen your salvation which you

prepared in the presence of all people a light of revelation to the Gentiles and the glory of your people Israel his father and mother Joseph and Mary were amazed at the things which are said about him and then I want you to notice something you know a man who has the Spirit upon him very often has a prophetic word even if it's only a few sentences see that's encouragement I want to give all of you when the Bible says you can all prophesy you have to have the Spirit filling you and you got to be earnest to get the gift of prophecy but you don't have to be a preacher that man may be a prophet they are very rare but prophesying is something two three sentences that you can share with somebody who comes to visit your home sharing a word that's exactly according to their need and very often

preparing that person for something that will come in the future we've had that experience numerous times in this church when we have had a word from heaven that's prepared people here for something they were going to face next week or next two weeks later and the word and not only that the word for the week that we send out from here every week to different parts of the world numerous people have told me that was an exact word for me according to my need at that particular time and that was a confirmation of what I heard from God you know when we love the Spirit to be upon us it's amazing what he does to us through us to bless other people so Simeon spoke to Mary and these were not easy words you know when you had to prophesy something hard and difficult for people generally those

so-called fake prophecies that you hear in many charismatic circles is the Lord has chosen you to be a great person he's going to encourage you and he's going to make you rich and all this that's not what Simeon was saying listen to this this child is appointed for the fall and rise of many in Israel verse 34 Luke chapter 2 and for a sign to be opposed that's how Jesus always is when Jesus comes into a synagogue the demons get disturbed how did those demon-possessed people sit so quietly when all the Pharisees were preaching they enjoyed those sermons they sat quiet but the moment Jesus came and you read demon possessed people would get all worked up in the synagogues and there would be a division in that synagogue with probably 99% of people opposing him and one person following him

Peter Andrew James and John would walk out of the synagogue with Jesus and the all the rest in the synagogue would try to kill him it's exactly like that with a servant of God today 99% of people cannot recognize a prophet or a servant of God today less than 1% will he's assigned to for the fall and rise of many before he came everybody would sit quietly but the moment he came there'd be a division many would fall some would rise the message of God's kingdom and the gospel can make you shoot up like a rocket to the highest level pull you out of the level of sins gravity and into those heavenly spheres or if you don't accept it it can because your responsibility has increased now I've often said to people who sit in this church if you're not serious about obeying God's Word brother this is

a dangerous church to come to why because your responsibility is increased moment you've heard God's Word and you'll be judged by a higher standard to whom more is given more is required you know if a company sent you from here to Delhi to carry 500 rupees in a packet and deliver it in the office there that's no problem but if there's 500 thousand rupees in that packet you're going to be responsible when you get to Delhi to deliver that to the company there so the more you come in here God's Word if you're not serious about obeying it your irresponsibility increases that's why I say if you're not serious about obeying you better go to some church where they don't preach God's higher standards this child is set for the rise and the fall of many and see exactly what happened in those three

and a half years and that's what exactly what happens when the body of Christ cuts through Christendom today bringing a division many will hate the prophetic message but some will rise and say this is what we've been waiting for which we missed so many years the vast majority will turn around the message and call it a false teaching and heresy because that's the way the devil scares people from coming into a godly life call it heresy call it false teaching call him a false prophet that's what they said to Jesus he's not preaching what Moses taught that's what they said about Paul he's not preaching the truth the fall and rise Jesus was set for the rise and fall of many and Paul was set for the rise and fall of many in 2,000 years every prophet that God ever sent into this earth was the

cause of the rise and fall of many people and we read further he said to and for a sign to be opposed many preachers are not opposed Jesus was opposed from day one when he began preaching as long as

he was not preaching he was just making stools and benches in his carpenter shop in Nazareth he was a nice man helping everybody everybody loved him but the moment he got into a pulpit and started preaching God's Word which is different from what other people were preaching he was opposed hated till they finally killed him a sign to be opposed imagine telling a baby mother with a newborn baby this baby is going to be a sign to be opposed by many people it's not easy to be a prophet to tell people the truth it's not but if you got to be if you want God to continue to use you you like to say

what God says this is going to be a sign to be opposed and a sword Mary listen to this I'm sorry to say this but you got to hear it a sword will pierce your own soul you'll see your child suffer one day you see your child hanging on a cross your soul will be pierced he said that he said I got to tell you it's like we tell Christians today well if you're gonna follow Jesus some people tell you you're gonna get a better car in a better house I'm gonna tell you you're gonna be persecuted you'll be persecuted by Christians first and then you'll be persecuted by the non-Christians as well Jesus said the if you were of the world the world would love you but because you're not of the world just like I'm not of the world the world hates you and the religious world will hate you because you expose

their sin you expose their worldliness and that's why you find through the years there are many prophets whom God has raised up who have not endured till the end with the same message they've compromised along the way because they found hey this message is not going to be very popular it's not going to be very accepted and they get tired of being called false teacher inheriting they give up and say okay fellas what do you want me to say that's the tragedy that's happened in Christendom I asked the Lord once this question I said Lord India has got nearly 1,200 million people where are the prophets don't you love India we need a lot more profits than other countries do and the Lord said to me I've raised up many people to be prophets in this land but most of them have fallen by the wayside

some go after money some marry the wrong woman some go after link up with some organization to get a bit of salary and some people just sin and compromise and change their message and so they fall by the wayside and they're very few that are left so here he speaks straight to here's a man who's old in age there are some great examples like this in Scripture till the end of their life they never compromise the message if it is a hard message that's it Jeremiah was like that Simeon was like that I'm sorry to say Mary you're gonna suffer Christians will first face persecution I said that for 30 years we're gonna go through the Great Tribulation we're gonna face persecution in India it's beginning it doesn't surprise me one bit it's written in Scripture all who live godly in Christ Jesus will

be persecuted 2nd Timothy chapter 3 verse 12 all in one way or the other one day it may be physical and at every point you can compromise it could the persecution could be in small ways in your place of work where your urge to compromise could be like giving a little money for that idolatrous festival nobody saw you giving the money the mark of the beast is on your hand not on your forehead nobody sees it you come to the church and you sit there with the mark of the beast on your hand and you look like a wonderful believer the same hand you lift up to praise God compromises in little little things but all who live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted and we read here that the thoughts from many hearts may be revealed that's another thing you know a whole lot of people sat in those

synagogues in those days and there could be good people there there could be bad people there people with good motives people with bad motives and everybody looks spiritual because they're all singing the same songs the Psalms and everything else they did in this synagogues those days they listen to the same message and they clapped and they appreciated one another and they looked all of spiritual until

Jesus came when Jesus came they be brought a division he exposed those whose hearts were not right and that's what made them mad it's like shining a torch into some corner where some secret sin is going on haven't you seen sometimes you move a little rock that's been lying in some place for years and as you move it you suddenly the sunlight comes in and all these little creatures that have

been living in the darkness comfortably for years suddenly scatter all over it's like that when light comes Jesus came as a light of the world and he told us now you're the light of the world but he came with the light of the world and all these people who were carefully hiding all their sin when the Pharisees were preaching they couldn't hide it anymore they got mad the Bible says when prophets speak in the church 1 Corinthians 14 the secrets of men are revealed and they can do one of two things they can either fall in their faces a God is here thank you Lord save me or they can get angry with the preacher see a prophetic message is like a scan a total scan of your life and it's free prophets don't take money for the scans and when you get the scan it's up to you you can get angry and

tear it up no I don't have any cancer rubbish that other 25 good doctors told me I don't have cancer they just collected my their fees but this guy who doesn't collect fees tells me I've got cancer he's probably right don't get upset or you can do something with that scan and say well Lord I thank God there's treatment I can be saved from it okay one last example there was also verse 36 and a prophetess now women too this is a balance I like the balance in Scripture I wish there were more balance of men and women in the church who also believe that we can share God's Word with one another even if we can't be leaders and preachers there was a prophetess Anna the daughter of Fannie well of the tribe of Asher she was advanced in years she was an old lady just like Simeon an old man and she

had lived only she had only seven years of marriage and her husband died and now she was 84 those days people got married young and she must have been 18 19 when she got married by 26 she was a widow and she decided what shall I do with the rest of my life I don't want to get married again I'll just serve God from then to the age of 84 nearly 60 years I like to see such people godly men like Simeon godly women like Anna who've been serving God for years and years and years and years and consistently never changed I really you know there are few men and women I met like this you can see saintliness on their faces they've never compromised they stood true 60 years they've gone on and on and on and on and on and on never changing and who put God above marriage and everything else and she

never left the temple serving night and day with fasting she didn't come to serve God once a week like the law said the law said once a week she said that's fine I'll do that once a week but in addition I shall also go other days to pray do you do only what is the minimum required to be a Christian the two types of Christians those who do the minimum required and those who do the maximum possible are you a minimum required type of Christian or a maximum possible type of Christian and I was a maximum possible I want to be like that I was like that when I was converted when I was 19 I want to be like that now I'm nearly 69 I want to be like that even if I live up to 89 maximum possible for God because you've got only one life because Jesus did so much so she devoted herself and at that

moment she also came and saw all these babies and the Holy Spirit led her see that poor couple there with that baby that's the one and she saw others were just talking and talking and talking and here were one old man and one old woman who found Jesus I sometimes think of that in many church gatherings so many people come to the meetings they hear the Word of God but one or two meet with Jesus and I tell you there's a lot of difference in the way those others went away from the temple that day they were talking about the latest gossip they heard in the temple from somebody else like you may come to church

and talk about the latest gossip you think Christians don't gossip there's some of the biggest gossipers I found latest gossip you heard from somebody who is pregnant who's getting

married and who is falling in love with somebody and who's happening what's happening in this person's house in that person's house Simeon and Anna didn't come to discover all that they came to meet with Jesus and they met with him seek and you shall find it's true you seek for gossip you find gossip you seek for Jesus you'll meet with Jesus it all depends what you want she met with Jesus and what did she do she was so excited first thing she do is say praise the Lord I like to see 84 year old women praising the Lord and really rejoicing because they met with Jesus devoted to Christ for so many years and not only that she went out and spoke to people it says to all those who are looking for the redemption of Jerusalem not to every Tom Dick and Harry she didn't waste time with them she

would talk to someone say oh this guy's only interested in more money and more forget about him get to talk to somebody else this guy's only interested in a house or promotion in his job forget about him but somebody was looking for the redemption of Jerusalem for godliness I found one she went around talking to such people why did we look at these examples the shepherds Simeon and Anna to say these are the people to whom God revealed the first coming of Christ and those are the type of people and there will be in the last days I believe that I've seen some of them already old people young people men women poor shepherds poor villagers were not not even educated like those shepherds looking for the coming Christ and they're ready what I want to ask you my brother sister we saw some

examples last study we've seen some this time are you gonna be in that number are you one of these are you fitting to one of these categories one common thing all of them had was a hunger for God whether it was Zacharias Elizabeth Joseph Mary the shepherds Simeon or Anna let's be ready because we're we are among one of the most privileged generations in history I personally believe it's my opinion I don't have a scripture to show you there were two privileged generations in history one which was there in the first coming of Christ and the second those are going to be there the second coming of Christ and there's a real possibility that you and I may be in that generation let's be ready let's pray bow our heads before God and whatever God has spoken to your heart it may be some specific

matter the Lord spoken to you something to set right some aspect of worldliness something which the Lord is spoken to you directly today prophetically I want to encourage you my brother sister respond to it confess the wrongs you have done and thought and say Lord I want to respond to your word it doesn't matter if you're 84 years old or 18 years old or younger and say Lord I want to respond to you all types of people who are ready and knew about your first coming and I believe that all types of people will be ready for your coming I want to be among them father help us we pray in Jesus name

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/18/SID18826.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/zac-poonen/people-who-were-ready-for-christs-coming-part-2/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net