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I have read the accounts of Joseph, Zechariah, Mary, the shepherds, the wise men, and John the Baptist many times, and have always read them as historical Biblical occurrences, but I never saw anything further than that. Until now, I never saw their application to me. They had a response to the Lord, and so do we – this has been very exposing and sobering.

When God's speaking came, Joseph, Mary, the shepherds, and the wise men willingly responded to the vision they saw of the Lord. They didn't count the cost. They fully gave themselves to cooperate with Him.

How about me? In my practical daily life, where is my heart to the Lord? In the morning, I open my heart to Him that I would be one with Him for whatever He wants to do that day, but, then, when He touches me with something upon His heart, "Do I care, do I really care?" And, what about my cooperating with Him? Am I willing to allow the Lord to invade my life for His interests? When the Lord is burdened for someone and places them upon my heart, am I willing to give up my time and invest myself even if it is inconvenient? Am I willing to drop everything I had planned when the Lord says to contact or visit? The Lord is burdened, but do I care? Do I really care? He wants to do something in their lives – can I cooperate with Him?

I also wanted to share something on the negative side of those we've been covering. The life of John the Baptist was a warning to me. His life started in such a positive way, He had a real vision of the Lord, He knew the Lord, he lived a life apart from everything and unto the Lord, he even introduced Him! He led others to Him! How marvelous, but what eventually happened? He landed up in jail due to his rebuking of Herod, How sad! It's hard to believe that someone who had seen such a clear vision of the Lord and acted upon that vision would end up in jail, even questioning if the Lord was the coming One, and eventually he was beheaded! How could this happen? Once he introduced the Lord, he should have taken the lead to follow the Lord, leading those who were his followers to now follow Jesus. Instead, they influenced him to continue his leading them. I was thinking about this. How could John have been so influenced to forget his vision? Perhaps they persuaded him with their questions, – "We've followed you all these years, now you're telling us to follow Jesus?" Maybe they said things like "You committed yourself to us, you were our teacher, we followed you and now you're going to leave us? No! You can't!" He should have taken a stand, but instead he listened to all the voices, and all the questions about Jesus were seeds that got into him. It was his downfall. So, the warning to me was, be careful about who you surround yourself with, who you keep company with, for as strong as you think your following the Lord may be, you could easily be led away from Him.

Don't think that you are so strong that you can withstand the speaking of others. What a warning! May we flee everything that doesn't lead us to Christ! Lord may we pursue You, run after You with all those who call upon You out of a pure heart! (2 Tim. 2:22)

Let me end on a positive note! I am very thankful for all the positive examples. The Lord came to regular people of all ages and from all walks of life – Joseph and Mary were a young, and poor couple, Zechariah, was an old priest performing his traditional priestly duties, the lowly shepherds in the wilderness were watching over their flocks at night, and the wise men, well educated Gentiles who were in a far away country, were ones who seemingly had nothing to do with the Jewish Messiah yet they were seeking life's meaning. To each of these, God gave a vision of the Lord, and revelations concerning Him. What an encouragement to all of us! We too are all different ages, from different occupations and from different backgrounds, yet He came to each of us! We also have received a vision of Him, and over the years the more we have come to know Him through His Word and fellowship, more and more revelations of Him have been made known to us! Hallelujah! Wonderful! In His Word, the Lord has promised that He will return. I pray that we would always pursue Him with a clear vision. May we not fall into a life of being complacent “church goers”, but rather may our lives be given to pursuing Him and running after Him with every fiber of our being, loving Him and building up one another in Him. May we pave the way for His return! May such a vision always be before us. Lord, may we cooperate with Your speaking in whatever way You would speak to us and may we care, really care for Your return!