



## **Changing Course What If God Spoke to You?**

There is much about the Biblical accounts of the very first Christmas and how God impacted those who came in contact with Jesus as a newborn and infant. There is one aspect to these reports which inspire me greatly and I would like to comment on that today. It is the flurry of times and ways God directly got through to various ones in the birth narratives. He used an angel, Gabriel to inform Mary that as a virgin she was going to give birth to a son, Jesus, who would reign as king forever. **In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary.** (Luke 1: 26-27 NIV) Later, in a dream an angel came to Joseph, who was betrothed to Mary and told him not to worry about Mary being pregnant, that God Himself was the Father of the child she was carrying. He had decided to quietly break off their coming marriage, but the angel reassured him that Joseph should not fear that Mary had been unfaithful. **But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.** (Matthew 1: 20 NIV) Then there is the supernatural spectacle the shepherds witnessed that first Christmas. **And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."** Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, **praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests."** (Luke 2: 8-14 NIV) And there is the star, which has been much discussed even in scientific circles. It somehow guided the Magi to Israel to meet Jesus and provided them with the insight into who Jesus really was. **After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him."** (Matthew 2: 1-2 NIV)

So what we see here is a fascinating set of accounts of God getting through to people and bringing them in to His plan. An angel while awake, an angel when asleep, a great host of angels in the night sky and a star of some sort that guided a collection of renowned leaders a thousand miles or more to the exact spot where they would meet a child who they realized they should worship. In each case, God guided people through supernatural and spectacular means to bring them into His plan. But then comes the rather bland and mundane, in comparison, way God got through to a non-descript fellow living in Jerusalem. We know nothing about Simeon except for the sparse description found in Luke's account of Jesus being brought to the Temple of Jerusalem to be circumcised. This is all it says of him. **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 upon him.** (Luke 2: 25 NIV)

Like all the others in these historical accounts, God spoke to Simeon but how that took place is nothing like any of the others. **It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ. 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, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel."** (Luke 2: 26-32 NIV) That's it. No spectacular lights, no majestic angels, no haunting dreams. Just somehow, the Holy Spirit guided Simeon's mind to realize that the fulfillment of Scripture, the promised Messiah would be in the Temple, and he would see Him if he went.

Have you considered the possibility that God Himself would also like to speak to normal people like you? You might ask how He would do that. Well, just like He did with Simeon. He can get His thoughts into your brain so that you can know He has gotten through to you. He won't knock you over with an angel appearance or a wild prophetic dream. He will though guide you if you are willing to listen to Him. Is it outrageous to consider the possibility of God guiding you, even speaking to you? It shouldn't be if Christ lives in you. It should be as normal as your heart beating or your fingers feeling pain from grabbing a hot stove. **To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.** (Colossians 1: 27 NIV) The assumption is, if you have Christ in you, if you have been born again and live for God, you will be led by the Holy Spirit. **Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation — but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.** (Romans 8: 12-14 NIV) When you live for God, when you reject the sinful way of life, you have at your disposal the Holy Spirit to guide and lead you. **For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law.** (Galatians 5: 17-18 NIV)

Let me take this thought one step further. Of course you have the Bible to guide your behaviors and direct your view of things. That goes without saying. Beyond that though, you have the Holy Spirit living in you and He is there to help you see what to do in any and every situation. Remember what was said of Simeon who was led by the Spirit to the Temple to meet Jesus? He was righteous and devout. In other words, he did what God said to do. He listened and obeyed. If you want the Spirit to guide you, you must have the rightness of Christ working in you, making you available for God to speak to you. You may ask, "How do you know it is God speaking to you?" There are four considerations in this. 1. If you think the Holy Spirit is guiding you in something, it never will contradict the Scripture or any commands of God. 2. It will pull you into deeper faith in Christ. 3. It will be clear and discernable in your spirit. You will know what He is saying. 4. It will empty you of pride and the desire to be honored. Your choice will be all about God.

When you begin to follow the Holy Spirit as He leads you, It will have a transformational effect on your life with God. You will be raised to new heights of praise and wonder at God and His work in you. It may impact others when you follow the Holy Spirit. Whether they like that impact you won't know until after you make the choice to do what He says. This process of hearing and obeying the Spirit will put you into the will of God. It will rightly align you with Him. When the Spirit leads you, and He will if you are available to Him, you will find that you are a part of a bigger plan of God, most of which is not known to you. It takes courage and faith to want to be led by God and then take the step He gives you to take. It may be like Abraham, being led to sacrifice what is most precious to you although that is rare. More likely, it will be as it was for Paul, who knew that God was leading Him, not into Asia but into Galatia. Be prepared for the Holy Spirit to stop you at times or tell you to pursue what you were not prepared to go after. Life with the Holy Spirit is a great adventure filled with surprises and wonder. At times, you may find it boring with no great deeds on your resume but take heart. The more you live with the Holy Spirit directing your steps, the more your life will reflect everything you imagined when you first believed in Christ as Savior.