

CHALLENGE AFTER GETTING READY FOR MIRACLE

Our young people presented tonight a program with the theme Getting Ready.

It's interesting to note briefly tonight the state of readiness that was present when the miracle came 2,000 years ago! I like to call this Characters of Christmas. You see, God had a cast of characters, 17 different ones in 4 chapters. Out of 250 in the New Testament, that's 1/60th or 1.6% covering this miracle.

Okay: 4 chapters - Mt. 1-2 and Lk. 1-2, and, 17 characters who could be listed as:

- 6 saints
- some shepherds
- 3 sinners
- a prophet
- a host of angels
- a bunch of stuffed robes (religious leaders)
- some Magi
- Gabriel
- and, the Savior of the world!

Let's just zero in on a few of these folks and try to heed what God is trying to tell us. Okay? Who were they? Well, Matthew lists a cast of 6 (turn to Mt. 1-2).

1. Mary
2. Joseph - fearful, faithful, obedient, seeking and sacrificing
3. Magi - willing to follow anywhere to find their king

4. Herod - more concerned about his crown than his soul
5. Chief priests and religious leaders - knew prophets, not believe prophecy
6. Jesus

Luke lists a cast of 11 more (turn to Lk. 1-2).

1. Zacharias - doubts, but believes
2. Elizabeth - humble [mother of my Lord]
3. Gabriel - stands in God's presence
4. Joseph
5. Mary
6. Innkeepers - helpful, but distracted
7. John (the Baptizer) - forerunner
8. Shepherds - in tune
9. Simeon - looking and seeing
10. Anna - waiting and praying, waiting and worshipping
11. Caesar Augustus - set the stage, too big to notice
12. Quirinius - followed, failed to know
13. Angels - proclaiming
14. Jesus

What part is there for you this Christmas?
Which response will you give the babe?
Who is Lord of all?

Are you like:

Augustus? Too big to notice
Quirinius? Too far to know
Innkeeper? Too busy to get involved
Herod? More concerned for earthly concerns than the soul?
Religious leaders? Knew it, but not believe it enough to go five miles south of town and experience it.

Or will you be a:

Mary? And treasure this in your heart

Joseph? Overcome fear to be faithful, obedient and observe

Magi? Go anywhere to get a sight of your king

Shepherds? Humbly in tune

Simeon? Looking and seeing

Anna? Waiting and praying.

Christ came for (negs.), but only (pos.) saw Him. Things haven't changed.