

## **Who are you like ? (A Christmas Message).**

**"Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour - Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:10,11).**

God's gift to us at Christmas - His very own Son - is FOR ALL PEOPLE, but not all receive Him the same way. Everyone fits into one of the 3 responses seen in the Christmas story:

**1. HOT:** Some received Him very WARMLY like the Shepherds and Wise-Men. Together they represent all humanity (Gentiles and Jews, the poor as well as the rich and powerful). But their response was the same - they BELIEVED and WORSHIPPED HIM. Before God our natural state makes no difference - what matters is our heart-response to Christ.

**THE BETHLEHEM SHEPHERDS,** looked after the Temple herds - the Passover lambs for sacrifice, and so were always the ones present to witness and register the birth of these lambs. So when the Lamb of God was born it was fitting that these Shepherds were chosen, to witness the birth of He who would die on Mount Moriah 33 years later. Their mission was to proclaim Him as **the SAVIOUR** since salvation must come through the Blood of the Lamb: **"They made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child (v17)- "There is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour" - v11)** **"The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen" (v20).**

Receiving Christ into our hearts results in an overflow of PRAISE to God for His wonderful gift of salvation and PROCLAMATION.

**THE WISE-MEN.** **"After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in the days of Herod the king, behold, WISE MEN from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is He who has been born KING of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and**

**have come to worship Him." When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled" (Matt2:1-3).** This was a large delegation of international leaders. The Magi were the King-Makers of their time. Their great international status is seen in the reaction to their arrival. They were the royal advisors and were present at any coronation to confirm and endorse the new King. So when God's King was born it was only right that the Magi were the ones chosen to witness the birth of Him who would one day rule the world. Whereas the Shepherds announced the Coming of a Saviour, their mission was to proclaim **His KINGSHIP**.

They were truly WISE MEN for they knew the desperate need of sinful mankind for a Saviour send from God and the need for a Ruler who would reign over man in peace and righteousness. They knew God's promise to send His Messiah-King and so were looking for the signs of His Coming. So when His star appeared they knew the Chosen One had come. They were SEEKERS after the True God, and having found Him manifest in Jesus Christ they worshipped Him, submitting to His Lordship wholeheartedly and giving their best to Him. **"When they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh"** (v11). Likewise today those who seek God will discern the signs of His Coming in the perfect life of Jesus Christ. They will find Him and then bow down before Him in worship, receiving and proclaiming Him as their King. The Shepherds and Wise-Men show us the true response of faith to Jesus Christ, the love, praise and worship of a burning heart.

**2. COLD: King HEROD** exemplifies the opposite response - COLD hatred. He was most disturbed at the Coming of Christ and was moved to violent action. **"After Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the King, behold,**

**WISE MEN from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is He who has been born KING of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him." When Herod the king heard, he was troubled" (Matthew 2:3).**

Herod the Great had ruled Israel for many years and was a master-builder. Why was this 'great man' so upset? Why are some people like Herod, fighting against Christ rather than receiving Him? He was a clever man. He knew the implications of the Coming of this new King. He knew the days of him being number one, of being King would be over if he received Jesus as the King. So he fervently tried to destroy Jesus: "**Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him**" (v13). "**Herod was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under**" (v16). Likewise people ever since who when they hear the claims of Christ to be King and Lord fight Him to their own destruction because they want to be king over their own life and Jesus threatens that. These Herods hate the Gospel, but all the Herods down the ages have tried but failed to stop Jesus Christ for God has made Him LORD of all. What foolishness to be a Herod!

**3. LUKE-WARM: The Inn-Keeper.** We have seen the hot and cold responses to Jesus but there is another response that we miss, that is perhaps the most tragic and sadly the most typical.

**"The days were completed for her to be delivered.**

**And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn" (Luke 2:6,7).**

Here we see Jesus looking for a place to be born. Through Joseph and Mary, He knocks at the door of an Inn. What a glorious privilege and opportunity afforded to that Inn-Keeper!

The Son of God Himself coming into His dwelling and be born there! What was his response? "***Sorry - full up. No room***".

Was he hostile (COLD) to Jesus?

No. He just had no room in his life for Jesus. He did not want to make any changes. He even offered Jesus a place in a cave for the animals. How sad - he missed the glory. He was deceived into thinking that by his half-hearted response he had done well.

Was he HOT? Did he receive Jesus? No. If he had truly known and believed in the Person who was knocking on his door he would have invited Him in. He would have made room even if it meant him sleeping out in the cold. He would have made whatever changes were necessary to make a place for Jesus to be born and dwell in his house.

He is like so many who are LUKEWARM.

Instead of inviting Him into their hearts they leave Him out in the cold. They are happy with Jesus being on the edge of their lives as a great man or prophet. They might call themselves a Christian but they don't receive Him because there is no room in their lives for Him. They are friendly from a distance but they don't want Him too close. They do not want their lives disrupted, changed and rearranged. They think they are OK, that they keep Jesus happy with them, because they occasionally say a prayer, go to Church or do something good - but they have kept Him on the outside and they will pay the price. They miss out on the glory, they miss the Presence of Christ and His Spirit and they miss their salvation for God's gift of salvation (Jesus) must be received into the heart or it avails nothing.

They think they satisfy Christ with their lukewarm response but they don't - as we see in Revelation 3:15-20 where Jesus confronts a Church full of unbelieving lukewarm people saying:

**"You are neither cold nor hot.**

**I could wish you were cold or hot.**

**So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot,**

**I will vomit you out of My mouth.**

**Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing' ('I AM FULL, MY LIFE IS FULL, I DON'T NEED JESUS.')** - **and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked (UNSAVED - the luke-warm are tragically deceived into thinking they are O.K with God because they are not cold)** **I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, *that* the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see (they need the salvation that only Jesus can provide and they can receive it only being receiving Jesus into their heart and life): "Behold, I stand at the door and knock.**  
**If anyone hears My voice and opens the door,**  
**I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me."**

As Jesus knocked on the Inn-keepers door to be born within, He is knocking at the door of your heart desiring to enter, be born within and live there always.

Are you HOT, COLD or LUKEWARM? Do you reject Jesus, keeping Him at the edge of your life where He can't disturb you much? Will you turn Him away to be born elsewhere and miss the glory (covering your guilt with some concession of good-will)? Or will you make room for Him and open your door and wholeheartedly receive Jesus into your heart (the centre not the edge of your life) as your King and Saviour? He is not satisfied with you being lukewarm - in fact it makes Him sick! He wants you cold or hot. Lukewarm is no option, it has no future - you will be vomited out! We must decide before it is too late.