

Anticipation

What is something that you highly anticipated?

- What did you think about during that time?
- What did you imagine?

Malachi 4:1-6 "For behold, the day is coming, Burning like an oven, And all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble. And the day which is coming shall burn them up," Says the LORD of hosts, "That will leave them neither root nor branch. ² But to you who fear My name The Sun of Righteousness shall arise With healing in His wings; And you shall go out And grow fat like stall-fed calves. ³ You shall trample the wicked, For they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet On the day that I do this," Says the LORD of hosts. ⁴ "Remember the Law of Moses, My servant, Which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel, With the statutes and judgments. ⁵ Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. ⁶ And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, And the hearts of the children to their fathers, Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.

- These are the last words from a prophet that Israel would hear for the next 400 years.
- During those 400 years and well before, Israel Anticipated a Savior. They had the promise. They had a Word from God.
- Also during those 400 years the Israelites went from being enslaved by the Medo-Persian empire, to being conquered by the Greek empire and finally conquered and occupied by the Roman empire.
- While they were eagerly anticipating a Savior, the world was falling down around them. Evil was taking over. Israel, as God's chosen people, was barely a nation, if even regarded as one.
- And during that time, they dreamed. And imagined. And discussed what that Savior might look like. Generations passed. And the picture of the Messiah became something so unlike what was prophesied, that when Jesus did finally come, most people did not recognize Him, even

though He fulfilled all the prophecies regarding His birth. (Jesus fulfilled all 324 prophecies concerning the Messiah).

But some people did recognize Him. Let's look at two of them and see what set them apart from others.

Simeon

Luke 2:25-30 And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. ²⁶ And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. ²⁷ So he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law, ²⁸ he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said: ²⁹ "Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, According to Your word; ³⁰ For my eyes have seen Your salvation

Anna

Luke 2:36-38 Now there was one, Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity; ³⁷ and this woman was a widow of about eighty-four years, who did not depart from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. ³⁸ And coming in that instant she gave thanks to the Lord, and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

- Both Simeon and Anna would have heard the same prophecies. Been a part of the same discussions. So what made them different? How did they recognize what almost everyone else missed?

What they had in common

1. Loved God and served Him

- Simeon - this man was just and devout
 - Anna - served God with fastings and prayers night and day.
2. They were waiting on God (not just doing their own thing. They were interested in what God was doing)
- Simeon - waiting for the Consolation of Israel
 - Anna - did not depart from the temple
3. They were listening to the Holy Spirit
- Simeon - and the Holy Spirit was upon him
 - Anna - Anna, a prophetess

At Christmas we remember the coming of Jesus - But the first coming of Jesus should remind us to anticipate the second coming of Jesus.

This reminds me of the parable of the 10 virgins

Matthew 25:1-13 "Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. ² Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish. ³ Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, ⁴ but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. ⁵ But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. ⁶ "And at midnight a cry was heard: 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!' ⁷ Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. ⁸ And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' ⁹ But the wise answered, saying, 'No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.' ¹⁰ And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut. ¹¹ "Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us!' ¹² But he answered and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.' ¹³ "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.

While there is a lot to get out of this parable, a few notable things that relate to what we are talking about:

1. Do not try to assign significance to every part of this parable, but look for the main point.
2. This parable is about waiting for the coming of Jesus
3. The oil is not necessarily the Holy Spirit. Since we cannot give of our portion to others, nor go buy some from somewhere else.
4. They all knew the bridegroom was coming
5. These are all people within the church, expecting to be a part of the wedding
6. The main point is preparedness.
7. How were they prepared?

Matthew 25:13 "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.

Watch – Gregoreo – Keep awake, be vigilant, watchful.

How do we keep watch for the return of Jesus? The same way Simeon and Anna kept watch for His first coming.

1. Love God and serve Him
 - We show our love for God by
 - Prayer
 - Time with Him
 - The way we treat others
 - Worship
2. Waiting on God
 - Not doing our own thing, but being interested in what God is doing
 - **Luke 2:49** And He said to them, "Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?"

- **John 5:19** Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner.
- Are we more interested in our life, or His life in us?

3. Listening to the Holy Spirit

- Abiding in Him
- **John 10:27-28** My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. ²⁸ And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.
- Making conscious and intentional decisions to listen to and pursue Jesus

Philippians 3:8-15 ⁸ Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which *is* from the law, but that which *is* through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; ¹⁰ that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, ¹¹ if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. ¹² Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. ¹³ Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, ¹⁴ I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵ Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you.