

Session 3

December 16, 2018

## MARY'S TRUST

Luke 1:26-38

Baptists sometimes have trouble with what to do with Mary. Catholics swear they don't worship Mary, but they fabricate doctrines about her and elevate her to the position of co-regent of grace with Christ. Fearful of any of that, Baptists have tended to go in the other direction, making Mary a simple peasant at best—or ignoring her at worst. The truth is, Mary, like Joseph her husband, is a hero of the faith. She was chosen by God to bring forth His Son. That makes her unique in all of humanity. While we certainly will not worship her, we certainly must respect her. Luke, Paul's faithful physician and God's New Testament historian, introduces us to this remarkable young lady prophesied in Scripture. Four key words will help us navigate through the narrative.

**Astonishment (vv. 26-29).** Ever the historian, Luke begins the account with a time stamp. The sixth month is in reference to the pregnancy of Mary's sister Elizabeth (v. 36). All the players are introduced with Luke's characteristic detail: Gabriel is an angel sent by God; Galilee is a town in Nazareth; Mary was the virgin; Joseph was her betrothed; their lineage was that of David. The Catholic error begins with Gabriel's greeting itself. Their translation "Hail Mary, full of grace" is a twisting of the text. God was indicating His favor toward her by choosing her as the vessel of Messiah. "The Lord *is with you*" can also be translated "the Lord *be with you*." In its text and its context, the angel's greeting suggested that Mary rejoice. But her response was one of astonished confusion. *Deeply troubled* does not mean "upset," but rather "perplexed." What in the world was going on?

**Information (vv. 30-33).** Gabriel responded to her astonishment with three encouragements. First, he told her not to be afraid. While this may have done little to calm her at the time, it reinforced the idea that the appearance of Gabriel was a good thing. Second, he called her by name. Like Jesus speaking to Martha in Luke 10:38, and again to Mary Magdalene at the garden tomb in John 20:16, calling Mary by name was a clear indication that Gabriel was an angel sent by God who had something special—and personal—to say. Third, he repeated the reminder, "you have found favor with God." What he was about to reveal required a clear head and a focused comprehension. The details of what would take place were then given. First came the facts about *what* would happen, then the explanation of *how* it would happen.

**Explanation (vv. 34-37).** Those who might have a problem with the virgin birth neglect Mary's own confession here. She is not sinless; but she is morally pure. Gabriel's explanation covers all the bases: this conception would be of God, not man; the baby born would be "holy," not sinful; He would be the "Son of God," not of Joseph, nor any other man. Finally, Gabriel attested to the credibility of God's promise. Mary's sister Elizabeth was well known as barren, but now she was pregnant with John the Baptist. If God could bring forth a child from a barren womb, could He not bring forth His Son from a virgin's womb? For with God, "nothing is impossible."

**Submission (v. 38).** Mary's words are hardly the response of a co-regent with Christ! Rather, they represent the humble, submissive heart of a bondservant. "May it be done to me" is not the

granting of permission, but rather the recognition of God's divine will and an expression of her willingness to submit to it. From this personal, private, but monumental encounter, the course of history was changed. No wonder Luke mentions twice in Luke 2, that Mary *kept* (pondered and treasured) all of these things in her heart.