

Women of the Bible

Lesson 8

Study Notes

Mary: Blessed among women

Text: Luke 1:26-38.

Key verse Luke 1:28 *And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.*

Introduction: The term in the text “highly favoured” carries the idea that she was given grace and indued with a _____. We know nothing of Mary’s background other than that she was a peasant and a resident of Nazareth, a city of Galilee. Mary is related to Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist, and the wife of the priest Zechariah. Elizabeth was also of a priestly family. Mary is declared to be a “cousin” to Elizabeth then Mary’s family line may have been priestly. Mary is presented in Luke as a person of _____ prepared to be an agent of God in the birth of the Messiah.

While we acknowledge that Mary was the most extraordinary of women, we should be careful not to elevate her too much. The point of her “blessedness” is certainly not that we should think of her as someone to whom we can appeal for _____.; but rather that she herself was supremely blessed by God. She is never portrayed in Scripture as a source or dispenser of _____, but is herself the recipient of God’s blessing.

A long tradition of overzealous souls throughout history have wrongly exalted her to godlike status. Even in our era Mary, not Christ, is the central focus of worship and religious affection for millions. They think of her as more approachable and more sympathetic than _____. They revere her as the perfect Madonna, supposedly untouched by the original _____, a perpetual virgin, and even co-redemptrix with Christ Himself. Catholic dogma teaches that she was taken bodily to heaven, where she was crowned “_____.” Her role today, according to Catholic legend, is mediatory and intercessory. Therefore, multitudes direct their prayers to her instead of to God alone—as if Mary were omnipresent and omniscient. Many people superstitiously imagine that Mary regularly appears in various apparitions here and there. In November 2004, a stale grilled cheese sandwich sold for \$28,000 in an eBay auction because the sandwich purportedly had an image of Mary supernaturally etched in the burn marks of the toast. A few months later, thousands of worshippers in Chicago built a makeshift shrine to Mary in the walkway of a freeway underpass because someone claimed to see an image of her in salt stains on the concrete wall of the abutment.

I. Mary’ Heritage.

Both Joseph and Mary descended from David. The both prior to David shared the same genealogy. Mary’s branch of David’s family tree can be traced through David’s son _____, while Joseph’s branch is the royal line, through _____.

Luke 3:31 & Matthew 1:6

The name Mary is the equivalent of the Hebrew “Miriam.” The name may be derived from the Hebrew word for “_____.” Mary’s hometown of Nazareth was in a poor district of Galilee, with a poor

reputation. We know this from Nathanael's disdain when Philip reports he had found the Messiah, and that he was from Nazareth.

John 1:45 Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. 46 And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.

Another detail about Mary's background is that she had a sister according to John 19:25.

John 19:25 Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.

Mary is a close relative of Elizabeth, mother of John the Baptist; the nature of that relationship isn't specially given to us, they may have been cousins, or Elizabeth may have been her _____ since she was of "old age" and Mary probably just a teenager herself. Girls in the culture of that day could be betrothed while they were as young as _____ years of age. Marriages were arranged by the bridegroom or his parents through the girl's father. Mary was betrothed to Joseph.

II. Mary's Holy Character.

One thing the Scriptures are very clear on is that Mary was a _____.

Luke 1:34-35

Matthew 1:20-25.

Her betrothal to Joseph was a legal engagement which typically lasted a _____. One of the main points of the betrothal was to demonstrate the fidelity of both partners. Only a legal divorce could end this binding contract.

III. Mary's Happy Worship.

Luke 1:46-55.

In Mary's praise to the Lord, she took no credit for anything good in herself. But she praised the Lord for His attributes, naming some of the chief ones specifically, including His _____, His _____, and His _____. She freely confessed God as the one who had done great things for her. The song is all about God's greatness, His glory, the strength of His arm, and His _____ across generations. She is rejoicing as one who knew God intimately as her Savior. She could celebrate the fact that God's mercy is on those who fear Him, because she herself feared God and had received His mercy.

IV. Her Relationship to Son.

In Luke 2:48 & 49 before Jesus began His earthly ministry, we see a conversation he has with Mary.

Early on Jesus was in effect, disclaiming any notion, that His earthly parents' parental interest could ever override the higher authority of His heavenly Father.

In Christ's earthly ministry Mary only appears in three scenes.

The first scene is at the wedding feast of Cana.

John 2:1-5.

In Jesus address to Mary, He is giving her a mild rebuke; she has no authority to command Him in spiritual matters. Being His mother did not give her any right to attempt to manage His mission as it pertained to fulfilling the Father's will on the Father's timetable. As a _____ he was her Son, But as God, He was her _____. It was not her business to command Him in spiritual matters. After this she remains in the background. She never again attempted to intercede with Him for miracles, special _____, or other blessings on behalf of her _____, her relatives, or anyone else.

The second scene is found in Mark 3:31-35.

Mark 3:31-35. There came then his brethren and his mother, and, standing without, sent unto him, calling him.³² And the multitude sat about him, and they said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee. ³³ And he answered them, saying, Who is my mother, or my brethren? ³⁴ And he looked round about on them which sat about him, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! ³⁵ For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.

As far as spiritual work was concerned, His earthly relatives had no more claim on Him than anyone else. He certainly did not set Mary on any exalted plane above His other disciples. He would not even at her urging, leave what He was doing. He would not allow Himself to be sidetracked, even by her sincere maternal concern. He must be about His Father's business, and she did not need to be consulted for that. Mary would _____ to Him as her Lord, rather than try to _____ Him as His mother.

V. Mary's Heart at Calvary.

John 19:25-27 Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.²⁶ When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! ²⁷ Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.

When we go back to Jesus' dedication Simeon reveals what would one day happen to the heart of Mary;

Luke 2:34 And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; ³⁵ (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.

While Mary stood and watch the soldiers pierce the heart of her Son; it must have pierced her own heart as well. Mary stood there as all the others with no power to come to his aid while He died upon the cross. However, He would come to her aid and appoint John to take her and care for her for the rest of her days.

After Jesus' death, Mary appears only once more in the Bible. She is listed among the disciples who were praying together in Jerusalem at Pentecost. Her name is never mentioned in the epistles. It is clear the early church never thought of making her an object of religious worship as so many have even today.