

“Paul’s First Letter to Timothy — Prisoners of Hope — Part 5, Mary”

Review:

Last Time: ‘Prisoners of Hope’, Part 4, Elizabeth and Zachariah. Today: We continue our study on “Prisoners of Hope”, Part 5 — “Mary”.

- ***To marry and bear children WITH THE HOPE AND EXPECTATION THAT YOU MIGHT BE THE VERY ONE CHOSEN BY ALMIGHTY GOD TO BEAR THE PROMISED “SEED OF THE WOMAN”. Eve, and her testimony in Gen. 4:1 makes this so clear, and no doubt many of her daughters and down through many generations after her, had that hope in the coming seed — and that they might be the very one that bore that son. It seems it was passed down from mother Eve that they were with the judgment also privileged to be a part of a long line of those that would bring this hope to its conclusion, which was ultimately based on the hope and promise of Gen. 3:15 & 16.***

This was the hope of women as it was for Eve beginning at that promise so long ago. The Gen. 3:15 & 16 promises (and judgments) began a new “age” scripturally speaking which is described in several different ways including “the foundation” or “beginning” or the “world”. The Greek word there is “aion” or “age”, perhaps a better translation from our current standpoint.

- ***Even unbelieving women have this hope but for them it is not with spiritual content, it is very sad to say. It is wonderful indeed that the judgment put upon women that day in the garden would be turned into blessing IF “they”, that is, the children, grow and prosper under the living and tender and heart-felt and spiritual care of their mothers. That is God’s promise to women and that is the basis for their “deliverance” from the effects of the judgment given to Eve and all that follow her. For she is “the mother of all living” (Gen. 3:20).***
- ***Last time we considered Elizabeth (and Zechariah): Weak Ones — Chosen to Prepare the Way***
 - ***Remember, God had not provided any prophets to Israel for a very long period. Not since the prophet Malachi’s last words had any prophet brought the word of God to his people:***

Mal. 4:5-6

5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD:

6 And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

- **Now, at the appointed time, the archangel Gabriel appears to Zachariah, a priest serving in the temple in Jerusalem:**

Luke 1:5-7

5 There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia, and his wife [was] of the daughters of Aaron, and her name [was] Elisabeth.

6 And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

7 And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were [now] well stricken in years.

- **Who was Zechariah and who was Elizabeth, his wife? Verses 5 & 6 give us the important detail. BUT GOD HAD NOT PROVIDED THE SON OF THEIR HOPES! AND, ACCORDING TO VERSE 7 THEY WERE BOTH “STRICKEN IN YEARS”. And they were (verse 6):**

“righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.”

- **But God had heard their prayers and sent Gabriel to Zachariah to announce the work of the Lord soon to be brought forth. Gabriel is, you will recall, one of only two angels actually named in scripture.**

Luke 1:12-13, 16-18

12 And when Zacharias saw [him - the angel Gabriel], he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.

13 But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.

...

16 And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God.

17 And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. [Compare with Malachi 3.]

18 And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years.

- *Zechariah would be struck with dumbness as a result of his unbelief of Gabriel's promise, but that dumbness would be healed when the babe is named John at his father's request.*
- ***Elizabeth (and Zechariah) - The Prophecy — Foreshadowed with Elizabeth's Conception:***

Luke 1:23-24

23 And it came to pass, that, as soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house.

24 And after those days his wife Elisabeth conceived, and hid herself five months...

- *So soon after arriving home after his term of service had ended, Elizabeth conceived a child as had been prophesied by the angel Gabriel.*

Our Outline Today: "Mary and Joseph — Blessedness Upon Women, Overflowing"

- ***Mary — A Virgin is Granted Motherhood of "the Seed of the Woman"***
- ***The Virgin Mary — Elizabeth Sings a Song of Praise Regarding Mary's Conception of Our Lord Jesus***
- ***The Virgin Mary — Her Own Song of Praise Marks Her Conception***
- ***John's Birth — Zachariah Testifies Regarding the Birth of His Son, John***
- ***Israel's Salvation — Zachariah's Second Song of Praise is Messianic Indeed***

The entire focus here is on these women and their husbands knowing the prophecies regarding the seed of the woman and how they had hoped for a part in the fulfillment.

I. Mary — A Virgin is Granted Motherhood of "the Seed of the Woman":

[READ] Luke 1:26-33

26 And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth,

27 To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name [was] Mary.

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.

29 And when she saw [him], she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.

30 And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.

31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.

32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:

33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

[READ] Luke 1:34-38

34 Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?

35 And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

36 And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren.

37 For with God nothing shall be impossible.

38 And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

- *Note that again it was Gabriel and again the message was personal to her by name and, as it was with the appearance of Gabriel to Zachariah, with the words “fear not”.*
- *But, significantly, this time it was not a message to her husband as in the case of Elizabeth, it was to Mary herself. Joseph would also be visited by an angel (in a dream in this case though) as Matt. 1:18-24 indicates.*

But here it is Gabriel revealing himself and his message directly to Mary!

- *Note that most significantly here it is stated that Mary was a virgin! No wonder in verse 37 we read these words: “For with God nothing shall be impossible.” And indeed with God nothing shall be impossible!*
 - *This is special indeed. For we are reading here that Joseph was not the natural father of our Lord Jesus. Verse 35 explains*

this fully: “And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God”. Those that deny the virgin birth therefore also the supernatural conception of our Lord and by implication also deny (or greatly misunderstand) the deity of our Lord. This birth will truly be the seed of the woman.

- *Verse 35 also, if we can see it, ties directly back to Gen. 3:15. Here in Luke 1 we have the explanation of how the offspring of Mary would begin to fulfill the O.T. prophecy. If we would understand this correctly, we would see that “the seed of the woman” promise is necessarily right in the middle of these events. Verses 29 and 32 - 33 establish that in the context of Old Testament prophecy regarding the redemptive plan of God and the focus on Israel and their kingdom promises. God’s love for his people was the ultimate basis for this hope of the nation and many in that nation were therefore “prisoners of hope”. AND THAT THIS WOULD ALL BE BASED IN SEVERAL DIFFERENT WAYS ON “THE SEED OF THE WOMAN”! MOST WONDERFUL.*

II. The Virgin Mary — Elizabeth Sings a Song of Praise Regarding Mary’s Conception of Our Lord Jesus:

[READ] Luke 1:39-45

39 And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Juda;

40 And entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth.

41 And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost:

42 And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed [art] thou among women, and blessed [is] the fruit of thy womb.

43 And whence [is] this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

44 For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy.

45 And blessed [is] she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord.

- *Mary immediately now goes to see her cousin Elizabeth when she received from the highest of the angelic host, Gabriel, the word of*

truth about her cousin Elizabeth. Don't you wonder why under these highly unusual (even miraculous) circumstances these two women would want to be together? Was it perhaps to fellowship around the promises of God, even "the seed of the woman" promises perhaps. They would surely want to share in songs of praise together their oneness as "fellow prisoners of hope".

- ***Now, when they meet, another miracle occurs: the six-month child in Elizabeth's womb responded to Mary's presence! The Holy Spirit had filled him from his conception though, right? Comparing verses 15 and 44 we see the entire picture so clearly? Considering that, is it not even to be expected that what happened would occur by necessity?***

Luke 1:15 For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.

Luke 1:44-45

44 For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy.

45 And blessed [is] she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord.

- ***And this is not all. Note that she is not only rejoicing together with Mary but she is also prophesying by the Holy Spirit as it says! Verse 45 makes this clear. FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF OUR STUDY TODAY, VERSES 44 AND 45 ARE SO TELLING. THE SEED OF THE WOMAN PROPHECY MUST HAVE BEEN ON HER MIND OR SHE WOULD NEVER HAVE UTTERED THESE WORDS AND THOSE OF VERSE 42:***

"Blessed [art] thou among women, and blessed [is] the fruit of thy womb. And whence [is] this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?"

Well, one truth she had received and believed was that she had been chosen to bear the Seed of the Woman! And, as verse 45 indicates Elizabeth by the Holy Spirit has said prophetically :

"And blessed [is] she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord."

III. The Virgin Mary — Her Own Song of Praise Marks Her Conception:

Mary's response to those words of the living God given by his servant Elizabeth brought forth a response in Mary herself which is so very appropriate. Her own song of praise connects directly with Hannah's in its wording and that song of praise was surely on her mind and in her heart as she uttered these words:

[READ] Luke 1:46-51

46 And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord,
47 And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.
48 For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.
49 For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy [is] his name.
50 And his mercy [is] on them that fear him from generation to generation.
51 He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

[READ] Luke 1:52-56

52 He hath put down the mighty from [their] seats, and exalted them of low degree.
53 He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away. *[this is so much like Hanna's song of praise found in 1 Sam. 2]*
54 He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of [his] mercy;
55 As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever *[lit. "unto the age"]*.
56 And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned to her own house.

- *Considering the seed of the woman promise, is it not crystal clear that these women were "Prisoners of hope" and that they knew it well? Indeed they all were. That that hope was the hope of Gen. 3:16 is proven over and over again in scripture. Was Paul right in his words in 1 Tim. 2:15, "saved through childbearing ..."?*
- *The reference she makes to Abraham and his seed connects directly to that promise in Gen. 3 and those following which amplify on it in chapters 12 - 15, 17 & 22. When Abraham was called by God and then the promises given to him which built directly on Gen. 3:15-16 were continued and even amplified to his son and grandson. Then finally David and his son Solomon were given additional promises depending on that original one. Throughout this*

entire and long period in Israel's history, through periods of wanton rebellion against the Lord God, there were still many who were "prisoners of hope" as we have seen now so often.

- ***Verses 54 through 56 state boldly that great truth that God keeps his promises:*** "He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of [his] mercy; As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever. And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned to her own house." ***The wording here is interesting and I believe very important regarding the teaching of the hope of women as Gen. 3:15 & 16 proclaims. For the hope once given could not be ignored by Almighty God. Whether that was as given to Eve, her daughters, or Abraham. For it was given to Christ himself as well. This entire "age" was to be characterized by that hope regarding the coming Seed of the Woman. The whole creation would ultimately be touched by it as God worked to bring about the fulfillments of the promises.***
- ***Praise God for his wonderful revelation here with such encouraging words. And consider how encouraged Mary was here from Elizabeth's confirmation of the miraculous working of God in support of his promises throughout the ages.***

IV. John's Birth — Zachariah Testifies Regarding the Birth of His Son, John:

Luke 1:57-66

57 Now Elisabeth's full time came that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son.

58 And her neighbours and her cousins heard how the Lord had shewed great mercy upon her; and they rejoiced with her.

59 And it came to pass, that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; and they called him Zacharias, after the name of his father.

60 And his mother answered and said, Not [so]; but he shall be called John.

61 And they said unto her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name.

62 And they made signs to his father, how he would have him called.

63 And he asked for a writing table, and wrote, saying, His name is John. And they marvelled all.

64 And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue [loosed], and he spake, and praised God.

65 And fear came on all that dwelt round about them: and all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill country of Judaea.

66 And all they that heard [them] laid [them] up in their hearts, saying, What manner of child shall this be! And the hand of the Lord was with him.

- *Remember the angels exact words in verses 13 and 20. Here is the perfect fulfillment in verse 64.*
- *It is no wonder then that Zachariah responds as he does, with great and verbal rejoicing... I find it difficult to even imagine what must have been going through Zachariah's mind at this point. For even if he had not suffered the judgment of Gabriel, would he not have been dumbfounded in any case? Wouldn't you? Me?*

V. Israel's Salvation — Zachariah's Second Song of Praise is Messianic Indeed:

Luke 1:67-80

67 And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying,

68 Blessed [be] the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited [*so it was now fact!*] and redeemed his people,

69 And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David;

70 As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: [*Other similar statements like Acts 3:21, 10:43, again, the age related to the seed promises*]

71 That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us;

72 To perform the mercy [promised] to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; [*Promised where?*]

73 The oath which he sware to our father Abraham,

74 That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear,

75 In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.

76 And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; [*Refs re. Seed promises fulfillments*

- Acts 3:25]

77 To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins,

78 Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us,

79 To give light to them that sit in darkness and [in] the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

80 And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel.

- ***Again, regarding “the seed of the woman promise” ...Verses 70 - 73 provide the link back to the promises concerning the seed of the woman in Gen. 3. This special language found here in verse 70 is indicative of that link: “As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began”.***
- ***“Since the world began” See Lk. 24:26-27; 44; Gen. 12:3, 49:10; Acts 3:21, and many more. Compare with Rom. 16:25 which speaks of the mystery “kept secret since the world began”.***
- ***“Prisoners of Hope”! That is what continues to be the privilege of mankind until our current day, and surely for the women that blessing also continues even though “the Seed of the Woman” prophecies have been in many ways already fulfilled. But more remains, as the rest of the prophetic program is brought to pass in due time. For us, living under the Dispensation of the Grace of God, though still in this “age” as so many before, our hope is still in that Seed and as Paul wrote in 1 Tim. 2:15, that hope endures. The great privilege of believing women today is as before, “Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.” Amen.***