

## Faith no 55

### Mary's Faith

December 24th, Christmas-Eve, 2017

Rev. Brian Kocourek

This Morning we will continue in our study of concerning faith and this morning I would like to look at the birth of Christ and the faith that it took for Mary and Joseph to receive the birth of the Son of God.

Since only the Book of Matthew and Luke speak of this story, we will begin by looking at the scene that the book of Matthew lays out for us.

**Matthew 1:18** *Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. 19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privately.*

First of all we need to look at what might have been going on with Joseph, because he was legally engaged to marry the virgin Mary.

Let's now go to the book of Luke to piece together this scenario as it begins to unfold into a beautiful story. This way we can have a better understanding of what was going on in the mind of Joseph and Mary.

And since the Book of Matthew did not fill us in on all the details let's now turn the book of Luke and read further concerning the birth of Jesus.

**Luke 1:1** *Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, 2 Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word; 3 It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, 4 That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed.*

What Luke is telling us here is that to better understand the Gospel which is the Good News concerning Jesus the promised Messiah he tells us he is going to fill us in on the details.

Then Luke begins to break down the details of the story of the birth of Jesus the Christ.

**5** *There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea, a certain priest named **Zacharias**, of the course of Abia:*

Now, this "*course of Abia*" or "Abijah" that is mentioned here was one of 24 courses or divisions wherein the Temple priests were divided so their service in the Temple would take place almost semiannually or every 24 weeks.

According to the historian Josephus in his "Antiquities VII. 14. 7" he said, "*Priests among the Jews had long been divided into twenty-four 'divisions', each responsible for the conduct of temple worship for one week at semiannual intervals.*

So we see the story begin by telling us about a certain Priest named Zacharias who was one of these temple priests and had been active during his course of Abia *and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth.*

Now, remember Aaron was the first High Priest in the Jewish tradition outside of course Melchisedek with whom the priesthood was fashioned after.

From Wikipedia we read, "According to the Bible, the **Tribe of Levi** is one of the tribes of Israel, traditionally descended from Levi, son of Jacob. The descendants of Aaron, who was the first *kohen gadol* (*high priest*) of Israel, were designated as the priestly class, the Kohanim.

The Tribe of Levi served particular religious duties for the Israelites and had political responsibilities as well. In return, the landed tribes were expected to give tithes to the Kohanim, the priests working in the Temple in Jerusalem, particularly the tithe known as the *Maaser Rishon*. The Levites who were not Kohanim played music in the Temple or served as guards. When Joshua led the Israelites into the land of Canaan the Levites were the only Israelite tribe that received cities but were not allowed to be landowners because "the Lord God of Israel is their inheritance, as he said to them" (Joshua 13:33).

Notable descendants of the Levite lineage according to the Bible include Miriam, Samuel, Ezekiel, Ezra, Malachi, and John the Baptist.

Now, in getting back to our story we see that both Zecharias and Elisabeth were both descendants of the tribe of Levi which were the Priestly order of Israel. So both of them knew what it meant to be in service to God for the people.

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

Now, this word righteous comes from the Old English word Righth-wiseness, and it means they were both correct in their knowledge towards the things of God. And the Bible says, ***Proverbs 12:5 The thoughts of the righteous are right: but the counsels of the wicked are deceit.***

So those who are considered righteous in the bible are a right thinking people of which Zacharias and Elisabeth were considered by God to be so.

And we read in ***1 John 3:7 Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he (God) is righteous.*** So we see that to be considered righteous it is because your actions are right. ***"He that is righteous doeth that which is right."***

And again in we read, ***1 John 2:29 If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.***

And if everyone that doeth what is right is considered righteous, then these are them who are also born of His (God's) Spirit. For the Apostle Paul taught us in Romans **Romans 3:10** *As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:*

Therefore no man can be considered **righteous** on his own without being **born of God's Righteous Spirit**. And therefore as Paul said in **1 Corinthians 2** that "**no man can even understand the things of God except the Spirit of God be in him**". Therefore no man can know and understand the things of God in order to do the things of God which are right unless the Spirit of "**God is working in him both to will and to do.**"

As Paul said in **Philippians 2:13** *For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*

Then it should come as no surprise that those who are not righteous and therefore do not that which is right are not born of God as we see in **1 John 3:10** *In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.*

Now, this should then take us one step further in understanding this story of the first church, which was the church to receive the first coming of the son of God. We see then that there were certain individuals who had the Spirit of God living in them, and were thus righteous and showed forth that righteousness by doing what was right.

Now, this is important to understand because too many times people think the Baptism of the Holy Spirit comes via some super duper supernatural experience, but that is not the case. Now, I am not saying you won't have a supernatural experience, but what I am saying is that just because you have a supernatural experience does not mean you have the spirit of God living in you.

This thought struck me the other morning when I was responding to an email of a precious friend of mine over in Norway. I had known this brother for many years before he was married and now with little children, he is seeing the reality of right thinking and right doing in their own lives and prayers.

And I told him in my email reply,

*The Bible says to "**Train up your children in the way they should go and when they get old they will not depart.**"*

*That means, Keep them close to your heart and show them love, both corrective and teaching them love, mercy, and grace. Explaining to them right from wrong, and always remember in doing so you **imparting the doxa of God**, which are God's **His opinions, His values, and His judgments** and that will make them one with God even as or in the same way that Jesus was one with God.*

In **John 17:22** we read *"And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:"*

And again in **John 17:26** we read, *And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that **the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.***

And in **1 John 1:1** we read, "*That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; 2. (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) 3. That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. 4. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.*

*And when you impart God's Doxa you are imparting God Life to your offspring. That is what you are passing along to your children, not only are they your offspring, but they are the offspring of God Himself, and by passing the doxa of God which you received on to your children you are filling them with his token, his life, for his Word is Spirit and Life.*

**2 Peter 1:2** *Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, 3. According as his divine power (His Word) hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, (which is God-likeness) through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory (doxa) and virtue: (this word virtue meaning the growing up into fully mature children) 4. Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these promises ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

*I hope and trust that when you will see the Divine plan of God in passing down his doxa from his first born son and then down, down, down, unto all the seed of God. And that it is our duty as parents to give this doxa of God to our children and to our children's children.*

We are told in **Acts 2:39** *For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.*

And again in **Isaiah 65:23** we read, "*They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them. 24. And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.*"

And before we go any further I think you all need to study brother Branham's sermons on the adoption, there are four sermons he preached back in 1960 in a series, and

**Ephesians parallels Joshua 60-0515E P:12** *Well now, many of these little pretty-faced mothers setting here, some of them sixty or seventy years old, would say, "Well, what have I done, Brother Branham?" You've raised your children. You've done what you were supposed to do. Maybe some old Dad setting here say, "Well, I've harrowed the fields; I've done this. I never preached." But you did just what God sent for you to do. There's a place for you.*

Listen, you don't have to be a preacher to fill your children with the doxa of God. You sisters that have children are the preachers to those little children. Fill their little minds with the word of God to the place that when they have done all they can do to stand they will stand therefore.

You've been placed by God with a stewardship over your children. ***Your children are the heritage of the Lord.*** You must give them the protection they need. Get up with them and pray with them before they get that bus, and when they get home talk to them to see what things the devil tried to tell them each day. Then teach them what to look out for and how to handle each situation. Years ago there was that little girl who was on her way home from school when she was approached by a Priest. And I hope you'll see by this story just how you as parents can and should, give your children the proper training at home. Because what you are doing is giving them the antidote to the devils poison that their little minds are being injected with in school. This little girl was on her way home from school when she was approached by a priest. And as she was approached by this priest and he asked her to attend his religious instruction, But she refused him, saying it was against her father's wishes. Then the Priest said that she should obey him and not her father. And she answered, *'Oh, sir, we are taught in the Bible, to "**Honor our father and our mother.**"'* But he said, *"You have no business to read the Bible,"* But she answered, *"But sir, our savior said, '**search the scriptures**"' [John 5:39]* And the Priest replied, *"That was only to the Jews, and not to children, and you don't understand it."* But she did not stop with this because she was trained well. She said, *"But sir, Paul said to Timothy, '**From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures,**"' [2 Timothy 3:15].* "Oh," said the priest, *"Timothy was being trained to be a bishop, and taught by the authorities of the Church."* "Oh, no, sir," said the child, *"he was taught by his mother and grandmother."* On this the priest turned away, saying *"that little girl knows enough of the Bible to poison a parish."*

***Ezekiel 44:23-24*** *23 And they shall teach my people the difference between the holy and profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean. 24 And in controversy they shall stand in judgment; and they shall judge it according to my judgments: and they shall keep my laws and my statutes in all mine assemblies; and they shall hallow my sabbaths.*

You know some people think that **Malachi 3:16-18** is about having get together's to talk the word. I believe **Malachi 3:16-18** is about what you do as a family in your own house together with your own family.

**Malachi 3:16** *Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and **that thought upon his name.** 17 And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. 18 Then shall ye return, and **discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.***

**Adoption or placing 60-0522E P:101** *And if each one of you in here now has not been positionally placed... You might not be nothing but a housewife. Well, you say, "Brother Branham, I never done a thing in my life. I'm not a preacher." Well, maybe God brought you here to raise a family of children; out of that family of children may come another family of children, that'll be a preacher that'll send a million souls to Christ. You had to be here. You're here for a purpose. Did you know that? Well, you say, "All I ever done was harrow across these old clods. And I'd take out every evening, didn't know how to make my kids a living. I looked at the poor little fellows with no shoes on. I've set and cried. I got an old buggy, and me and maw went to church." Don't you worry, brother. You just keep loving Him; He's got a purpose for you. You just stay right the way you are; just go right on. See? You might not never preach a sermon, but you might be the great-grandfather of one that'll do it. 102 Did you know that **God credited** (Let's see now, what was his name?) **Levi, to pay tithe when he was in the loins of Abraham**, when Melchisedec met him? How many knows that? And let's see, Abraham begot Isaac; Isaac begot Jacob; Jacob begot Levi, which was father, grandfather, great-grandfather. When he was in the loins, **in the seed of his great-grandfather, the Bible credited him for paying tithes to Melchisedec.** Oh, my, my, my, my brother.*

**Manifested sons of God 60-0518 P:67** *Now, remember, God predestinated you by foreknowledge, that you were coming to this. Everybody understand it, raise your hand. See? God, by foreknowledge, predestinated you to come to the promised land. What is the promised Land for the Christian today? Just raise up your hand if you know. "The promise is unto you and to your children, to them that are far off. And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, that I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh, your sons and your daughters." And in **Isaiah 28:18**, "Precept must be upon precept, line upon line; here a little, there a little; hold fast to that what's good. For with stammering lips and other tongues will I speak to this people. And this is the rest (This, the Rest) the sabbath land that I said that they should enter into. And, for all this, they would not hear, but they wagged their heads, and walked away, and wouldn't hear It." See? Exactly.*

Now in getting back to our story we see that Zecharais and Elisabeth had no children as yet but they both served God in their lives as we read in verse 7.

*7 And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years. 8 And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course, 9 According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. 10 And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense. 11 And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. 12 And when Zacharias saw him, 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. 14 And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. 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. 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.*

Now, listen, we are looking at the promise of the coming messiah and this is all preparation for that promised son to come. And yet we see a promise of John another promised son. Why? Because he was to prepare the hearts of the people to receive the Messiah, which was the son of God. So we are still looking at God's preparation here.

*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. 19 And the angel answering said unto him, **I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings. 20 And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season.***

*21 And the people waited for Zacharias, and marvelled that he tarried so long in the temple. 22 And when he came out, he could not speak unto them: and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple: for he beckoned unto them, and remained speechless. 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, saying, 25 Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein he looked on me, to take away my reproach among men.*

Now, think about this. here is an old man and old woman given a promise like Abraham and Sarah, and all this is just preparation for the rest of our story concerning the birth of Jesus the first born Son of God.

*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 favored, 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 favor 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. 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.*

Now, notice her response, after the angel explained what the promise was, she said, **Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word.**

She never said, *this is unbelievable.* or I can't believe my ears. No, she said whatsoever the Lord's promise is, I accept it as mine. **"be it done unto me according to Thy Word."**

Look at her faith, she heard the promise and recognized it was a Biblical promise for Isaiah had promised "a Virgin shall conceive" and an Angel from God came down and delivered that Biblical promise to her.

And you say, well that was her, but let me tell you something, an Angel has come down in this hour and has delivered a promise to you, and so what is your reaction?

The angel said to you, **"I no longer call you church I call you bride."** The angel said, *"you are flesh of his flesh and bone of His bone and spirit fo his spirit."*

From the angels message, **Rising of the sun 65-0418M P:47** he said, *" the whole world has to recognize that He's alive again. He was not only the Mechanics (God's Word), He was the Dynamics to prove It. And if He, being the Groom, the Bride has to come forth, 'cause It's part of Him. And It can only be the manifestation of the fulfilling of all of revelations and the others that spoke of the Bride. And It can only manifest... And if it does something different from the Groom, it isn't the Bride, because **She's flesh of His flesh, bone of His bone, Life of His Life, power of His power. She is Him.** As man and woman are one, and woman taken from his side, She has taken **His Spirit** (the feminish Spirit from Him), the flesh from His side, made both mechanics and Dynamics, **the Wife--the Spirit of Him and the flesh of Him and put it together and made mechanics and Dynamics.***

And is your response like that of Mary? **"Be it unto me according to your Word Lord"**.

The angel said to you,

**Spoken word original seed 62-0318E P:175** Notice, what harmony. Jesus never did anything until seen of the Father or the Father showed Him first: (Harmony between God and Christ. See? **John 5:19**) **So will the Bride, and He shows Her His Word of Life (He shows Her), and she receives It. She never doubts it.** Nothing can harm Her, not even death; for if the Seed be planted, the water will raise it up again. Amen. (Now, I got a great big "Hallelujah.") **Here is the secret: the Word is in the Bride and the mind of Christ to know what He wants done with the Word, and She does it in His Name. She has THUS SAITH THE LORD.** Then it is germitized; **so the Holy Spirit waters it until it is grown and serves its purpose. They do only His will.** (Amen. I'll believe that.) No one can persuade them different. **They have THUS SAITH THE LORD, or they keep still. Then they will do the works of God.** For **it is Himself in them,** continuing His Word to fulfill as He did complete in His day. All things when He was here, He did not complete all when He was here, for it was not time yet.

And what is the brides response to this promise from God? "***Be it done unto me according to Thy Word.***"

Now, back to our story... but let's read from Matthew now for just a moment when the angel appeared unto Joseph...

**Matthew 1:20** *But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. 21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. 22 Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, 23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. 24 Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: 25 And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.*

And now let's turn again to **Luke Chapter 1:39** *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.*

This was no small stroll over to Elisabeth's home, it was in fact 90 miles that Mary walked alone as a newly pregnant mother. That would be like walking from Cincinnati Ohio to Jeffersonville Indiana, or from Indianapolis Indiana to Cincinnati, Ohio. That was no small accomplishment especially for a pregnant woman. But when the Lord gives you wonderful revelation and you begin to see the manifestation of that revelation coming to pass, you are willing to go great distances to share it with others.

**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. 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. 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. 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. 56 And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned to her own house.*

Now, I want to stop here just for a minute in case there is any male chauvinist listening in to this sermon. Because I know that just as the Muslim religion has a oneness spirit on them and the spirit of male chauvinism exudes from these men so too among many forms and sects of so called Christians we see that same spirit of male chauvinism prevail where they think the woman is just a door mat.

It is not just among the Muslims where the woman is not permitted to enter the room where her husband is eating with his male friends, the same thing takes place right in this message among certain cults who claim to believe the Message, but have no clue to what brother Branham actually taught.

So let me tell you something brothers and sisters. Br. Branham, God's prophet said there will be more women make the rapture than men. And God Himself gave this precious revelation of the first coming of the first born Son of God to a woman first before he gave it to her husband. So don't get uptight my brothers, "*for in Christ there is neither male nor female*". Because "*by One Spirit we are all baptized into one body.*"

*57 Now Elisabeth's full time came that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son. 58 And her neighbors and her cousins heard how the Lord had showed 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 marveled 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. 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 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: 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; 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; 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.*

**Luke 2:1** *And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. 2 (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) 3 And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. 4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) 5 To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.*



Nazareth is the hometown of Mary and Joseph. In 5 B.C., just before the birth of Christ, the Romans require them to travel to their ancestral home (they were both of the lineage of King David) of Bethlehem. The couple travels the roughly 80 miles (about 129 kilometers) to the city, where Christ will be ultimately born in a stable and laid in a manger (Luke 2:1 - 20). His birth, which occurs on or around the Feast of Trumpets (September 2 in 5 B.C.) fulfills the prophecy found in Micah 5:2. Joseph, on the eighth day after Mary gives birth, takes the family to Jerusalem so that the Lord can be circumcised according to the law of God (Luke 2:21).

Forty days after Jesus is born, fulfilling the purification requirement of Leviticus 12, Mary and Joseph travel to Jerusalem's temple to present him before God. The trip is only 6 miles (9.6 kilometers) long. His parents make an offering to the temple of two young birds. It is during their visit that a priest named Simeon prophesied about Jesus' mission in life and blessed his parents (Luke 2:22 - 35).

Before Mary and Joseph leave the temple to return home a woman named Anna, a widowed prophetess who lived in the house of God, blesses them as well (Luke 2:36 - 38). The family then makes the short trip back to Bethlehem.

Now, I want you to look at the condition they had to go through all for standing with the manifestation of the revelation god had given them. we travel today but before we go we check the air pressure in our tires, and the oil, and use our cell phones and internet connections to find a room reservation lest we get there and there are no rooms. I think it was the Patton's that told me they had just that problem one time when they went to a family reunion and when they got there, there was no room to stay with the relatives, and there was no room at the local inns and so they had to drive about an hour and a half, something like that to the nearest hotel with rooms because there was some sort of convention taking place in the city of the reunion. Br. Steve, could you image having had to walk that with Sandra on a Donkey?

I remember my first mission trip to the Philippines in the year 2000 where an entire church walked 26 miles over the mountain and through the jungle just to attend our meetings there in a little make shift pavilion they used for their church. And then years later in Blantere Malawi where 2 truckloads of believers had drive 3 days over 1300 kilometers from Mozambique just to attend our meetings there, and they were stacked in these cattle trucks with no sitting room because they had about 70 believers standing shoulder to shoulder for three days as they traveled over dirt roads to come. And I will never forget one man who in 2004 traveled the length of the Congo river and it took him over two weeks to arrive beginning first by canoe, then by fishing boat, and then by barge until he traveled thousands of kilometers over water just to attend our meetings. And brothers and sisters that's a very humbling experience to see, that people come so far to hear the word of the Lord. And they did not come to see me, they came to see God, and as brother Branham said our gift then is to die to self that they might see God that they *came to see*.

Brother Branham put it best when he said in his sermon, **Invasion of the USA 54-0509 P:46** *I, sometimes I think of my ministry, and see people come. And I'd get in a hotel room, say, "God, who's the people coming to see, me or You?" See? "If they're coming to see me, they're lost yet; but, O God, tear me down and take me away. I want to represent You, the One Who'll stand before someday with trembling hands and trembling, feeble body, looking at You, knowing that my soul hangs by Your decision."* Let us exalt Christ.

**6** *And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. 7 And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. 8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. 10 And the angel said unto them, **Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.** 11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is **Christ the Lord.** 12 And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. 13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, 14 **Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.** 15 And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. 16 And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. 17 And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. 18 And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. 19 But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. 20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them. 21 And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was*

called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb. **22** And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord; **23** (As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;) **24** And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons. **25** And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was **Simeon**; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and **the Holy Ghost was upon him**. **26** And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ. **27** And **he came by the Spirit into the temple**: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, **28** Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, **29** Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: **30** **For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,** **31** Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; **32** A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel. **33** And Joseph and his mother marveled at those things which were spoken of him. **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**. **36** And there was one **Anna**, a **prophetess**, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a **great age**, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity; **37** And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, (that's 84 years old) which **departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day**. **38** And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem. **39** And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, **they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth**. **40** And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him. **41** Now **his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover**. **42** And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast.

Now, we could go on and on about how Herod set forth to Kill young Jesus and how his parents had to flee into Egypt and so many other story's of the trials that were associated in the raising up the young Messiah to the place where He one day entered the river Jordan and then God filled him with His Fullness. And that was 30 years later, so just think for all those years Joseph not only taught Jesus carpentry but he taught him the Word of God. And the Bible tells us that **the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him**.

Let us pray...