

2019-2020 Bible Study #9

11/12/19

Luke 1 (Cont)

Luke 1 (Cont)

- **Luke 1:18-25** *“and Zechariah said to the angel how shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years.... to take away my reproach among men”*
 - Zechariah was asking: “ how is this possible?”
 - Gabriel responds with, “do you know how I am?”
 - He was the angel who delivered the message to *Daniel* that the Messiah would come in 490 years
 - Because *Zechariah* did not believe the “Good News,” he was not going to be able to speak
 - He will be bound up with this information but not able to talk to anyone about it
 - He could not proclaim the “Good News”*

Luke I (Cont)

- **Luke 1-26-27** *“In the sixth-month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David; and a virgin’s name was Mary”*
 - We do not have a definitive account of Mary’s genealogy, but Christian tradition tells us that she was of the family of David (**Luke 3:23-38**)
 - This was not important for **Luke** or **Matthew**
 - In fact, many say that both *Joseph* and Mary were of the house of *David*, but the text does not say that about Mary

Luke 1 (Cont)

- Mary's heritage is ambiguous
- Later in **Luke 1:36**, it says that *Elizabeth* was her cousin *syngenes* (relative) which in Greek has many meanings
 - Third cousins twice removed
 - Related by marriage
 - Growing up in the same village could be considered as being in the same family
- Thus, Mary's and *Elizabeth's* genetic relationship is unclear
- On the other hand, **Luke** like **Matthew**, wants us to know that *Joseph* was of the house of *David* to validate that Jesus was the Messiah
- Let up make a brief review of the dogmas on Mary *

The Incarnation

- Teachings on Mary:
 - The ***Annunciation*** (celebrated on March 25)
 - Fiat provided Jesus both human and divine nature
 - Union of two natures is the “hypostatic union”
 - ***Perpetual Virgin***
 - ***Immaculate Conception*** - Pius IX *Ineffabilis Deus* -1854
 - ***Assumption*** – Pius XII *Manificentissimus Deus* - 1950
 - ***Mother of God (Theotokos)***

Luke 1 (Cont)

- **Luke 1:28-34** *“and he came to her and said, **hail, full of grace**, the Lord is with you...therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the son of God”*
 - ***Kecharitomene***, Greek for “full of grace”
 - There is no real good translation of this word
 - Father said it could be translated “be joyful, rejoice you who are given the thing which caused rejoicing, the Lord is with you”
 - Grace (*Charis*) is seen as a gift that produces joy or rejoicing

Luke 1 (Cont)

- To a child, “gift” implies something wonderful that makes him smile, rejoice, and be happy
- Grace causes “joy”
- It is God’s blessing, His love, His relationship, His life that He is sharing with us
- Luke is hoping that you will hear in *Kecharitomene*: “rejoice, rejoice, rejoice”
- Notice that Mary is also afraid of the Angel

Luke 1 (Cont)

- Many hear the “Hail Mary” when reading this passage
- But that is not what Luke hopes you hear as it had not been formulated at this time
- Luke is hoping that you will hear his emphasis on “rejoicing”
- “Rejoice,” you are filled with “joy” for the Lord has given you that which calls for “rejoicing”
- Father then asked that we look back at the prophet **Zephaniah 3 ***

Hail Mary Prayer

- Hail Mary,
Full of Grace,
The Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou among women,
and blessed is the fruit
of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary,
Mother of God,
pray for us sinners now,
and at the hour of death. Amen.

Zephaniah

Zephaniah 632 -628 BC a Pre-Exilic Prophet

- Unfortunately, almost all of the information we have about him comes from his book
- He prophesied during the time of the prophets *Isaiah* and *Micah* and during the reign of the good **King Josiah** of *Judah*
- He, like *Isaiah*, was prophesying about the coming destruction of *Jerusalem*
- At much of that time, *Jerusalem* was a very wicked city, described as an “adulterous bride of God” who had become a “harlot”

Zephaniah (Cont)

- The people of *Jerusalem* were prostituting themselves by worshiping foreign gods
- He preached against the sins of idolatry which had been rampant during the reigns of King *Manasseh* and *Amon*
- He laid the ax to the root of the religious and moral corruption which had even reached the sanctuary of the Temple
- He predicted the coming “**Day of the Lord**”

Zephaniah (Cont)

- He pointed toward a period of religious reforms (which were carried out by King *Josiah*)
- *Zephaniah*, along with *Isaiah* and *Micah*, saw *Jerusalem* as a wicked prostitute about to be destroyed
- They prophesied, that **after its destruction**, there would be a **restoration of the city and the people of God**
- *Zephaniah* did the same thing about halfway through his book

Zephaniah 3 (Cont)

- **Zephaniah 3:1-10** *“Woe to her that is rebellious and defiled, the oppressing city!...does not trust the Lord...her judges are even wolves that leave nothing till morning”*
 - *Jerusalem* was an adulterous woman who did not trust *Yahweh* because she was worshiping foreign gods
 - The people were a bunch of liars, deceivers, and sinners
 - But, after the destruction, God would restore the city*

Zephaniah 3 (Cont)

- **Zephaniah 3:11** *“On that date you shall not be put to shame because of the deeds by which you have rebelled against me; for then I will remove from your midst your proudly exalted ones, and you shall no longer be haughty in my holy mountain”*
 - This will happen after the Exile
 - When *Babylon* conquered and destroyed *Jerusalem* in **587 B.C.**, the wicked either died or were taken into the Exile
 - However, a third group, the “righteous,” were “**left behind**” in *Jerusalem**

Zephaniah 3 (Cont)

- **Zephaniah 3:12** *“for I will leave in the midst of you a people humble and lowly”*
 - Father pointed out, that throughout “Salvation History,” we find good people who were “left behind”
 - This is totally different from the crazy Protestant idea in the “left behind series” by *Tim LaHaye*
 - “Salvation History” can be seen as the restoration of God’s creation
 - After the flood, *Noah* and his family repopulated the earth
 - The same will happen here, as those “left behind” as a **remnant**, restored the city and its greatness”*

Zephaniah 3 (Cont)

- **Zephaniah 3:12-13** *“They shall seek refuge in the name of the Lord, those who are left in Israel; they shall do no wrong and utter no lies, nor shall there be found in their mouth a deceitful tongue...”*
 - They were no longer “stinking polytheists” as they sought refuge in the name of *Yahweh*
 - They were the faithful monotheistic **remnant** of *Jerusalem* who eventually will receive the presence of the Lord
 - Next, we will hear about the prophesy of the “Glory Cloud” returning to this faithful **remnant***

Zephaniah 3 (Cont)

- **Zephaniah 3:14** *“Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion; shout aloud, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! The Lord has taken away the judgment against you, and has cast out your enemies. The King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst”*
 - God cast out their enemies
 - Many of us may be hearing the *Magnificat* here
 - The image is about the “Glory Cloud,” the divine King, returning to the **remnant** of *Israel*
 - That **remnant** was made up of the righteous people who trusted in the Lord and were left behind

Zephaniah 3 (Cont)

- That **remnant** had remained in *Jerusalem* and *Judah* for 500 years and were the descendants of those who never left
- Finally, one particular wonderful “daughter of the *Jerusalem*” and the **remnant** received the “Glory Cloud” in her midst
- Luke was not giving us a Marian devotion here; he was trying to show us that at the moment of the incarnation, the “Glory Cloud” returned to his people
- His fascination with the idea of “rejoicing” is in hope that we will hear an echo back to *Zephaniah*
- Father said that in case you can’t see it, look at these references in the next verse, and you will find the Magnificat
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Zephaniah 3 (Cont)

- **Zephaniah 3:15-18** *“the Lord is taken away the judgment against you,And I will save the lame and gather the outcast, and I will change their shame into praise and renowned in all the earth”*
 - We hear all of these words in the Magnificat
 - Also, many people see the Magnificat in relationship to Hannah’s hymn, but unfortunately they do not know its relationship to *Zephaniah* *

The Magnificat – the Prayer of Mary (Luke 1:46-55)

- My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit **rejoices** in God my Savior for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant. From this day all generations will call me blessed: the Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his Name.
- He has mercy on those who fear him in every generation. He has shown the strength of his arm, he has scattered the proud in their conceit.

The Magnificat – the Prayer of Mary (Cont)

- He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, and has lifted up the lowly.
He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty.
- He has come to the help of his servant Israel for he remembered his promise of mercy, the promise he made to our fathers, to Abraham and his children forever.
- (Read every day in Evening Prayer of the Liturgy of the Hours)

Hannah's song (1 Samuel 2:1-10)

- My heart **rejoices** in the LORD.
My strength rises up in the LORD!
My mouth mocks my enemies
because I **rejoice** in your deliverance.
- ² No one is holy like the LORD—
no, no one except you!
There is no rock like our God!
- ³ Don't go on and on, talking so proudly,
spouting arrogance from your mouth,
because the LORD is the God who knows,
and he weighs every act.

Hannah's song (Cont)

- ⁴ The bows of mighty warriors are shattered,
but those who were stumbling now dress themselves
in power!
- ⁵ Those who were filled full now sell themselves for
bread,
but the ones who were starving are now fat from
food!
The woman who was barren has birthed seven
children,
but the mother with many sons has lost them all!
- ⁶ The LORD!
He brings death, gives life,
takes down to the grave, and raises up!

Hannah's song (Cont)

- ⁷ The LORD!
He makes poor, gives wealth, brings low, but also lifts up high!
- ⁸ God raises the poor from the dust,
lifts up the needy from the garbage pile.
God sits them with officials,
gives them the seat of honor!
The pillars of the earth belong to the LORD;
he set the world on top of them!
- ⁹ God guards the feet of his faithful ones,
but the wicked die in darkness
because no one succeeds by strength alone.

Hannah's song (Cont)

- ¹⁰ The LORD!
His enemies are terrified!
God thunders against them from heaven!
The LORD!
He judges the far corners of the earth!
- May God give strength to his king
and raise high the strength of his anointed one.

Luke 1 (Cont)

- **Luke 1:28-34 (cont)** “....therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the son of God”
 - As we heard in *Zephaniah*, the “Daughter of Zion” is descendant of the pure **remnant** that never left
 - Father pointed to a double fulfilment: the **remnant** will receive the “Glory Cloud” and it will return to this specific woman
 - *Jesus* means “Yahweh saves”
 - We know He is the son of David because He was adopted by *Joseph*
 - We also hear about a virginal conception, but since Mary was betrothed to a son of *David*, the child will be the adopted son in the line of *David*

Luke 1 (Cont)

- Some suggest that it would have been better if Jesus was a real direct descendant from *Joseph*
- Father pointed out that it would have missed the whole point of this story
- Salvation History is all about salvation via “adoption”
- In **2 Samuel 7:14**, we see the natural sons of *David* being “adopted by God”
- God says “your sons shall be my sons”
- Here, the natural son of God is being adopted into the line of *David*
- From **2 Samuel 7:13**, we know that this child will be the Messiah

Luke 1 (Cont)

- This is a reference concerning the Early Church's view that *Joseph* was an older man and widower and Mary was a temple virgin
- He pointed out that many have never heard this idea, and yet, every year we celebrate "The Presentation of the Virgin Mary" (Celebrated on November 21)
- Father also stated that independent Israeli researchers using the Dead Sea Scrolls and other texts have determined that this was a tradition of that time
- This is important as it relates to the story of Hannah in **1 Samuel 1:1-28**

Luke 1 (Cont)

- *St. Augustine* and *Gregory of Nyssa* have both written about Mary taking a vow of a temple virgin
- *St. Jerome*, however, did not accept this theory since it was not present in the New Testament
- Again, Father said that until the last century *Joseph* was portrayed as an old man in religious art *

Luke 1 (Cont)

- **Luke 1:35** *“And the angel said to her, ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the most high will **overshadow** you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God’”*
 - The Greek word for overshadow or to “put shade on something” is *episkiazo*
 - This word can be found in the Greek *Septuagint*
 - Father said that if we want to understand how a word is being used in the New Testament, it is helpful to look at how it was used in the *Septuagint*
 - Thus, the word *episkiazo* only appeared in a few places in the *Septuagint* and it was always found in reference to where God’s “Glory Cloud” rested on the Ark of the Covenant

Luke 1 (Cont)

- Look at **Exodus 40:34-35** (where the “Glory Cloud” filled the temple and the Glory of the Lord abode and rested upon the tabernacle)
- This meant that *episkiazo* was an important concept for the Jews
- It was referred to as the “*Shakina*” in *Aramaic* which came from the Hebrew word “to rest upon”
- The Jews saw God dwelling among his people in this invisible cloud (cloud by day and fire by night)
- Father said that these references were in anticipation of the incarnation

Luke 1 (Cont)

- So the Greek word *episkiazo* was reserved in the Greek Septuagint only for the “Glory Cloud” resting upon the Ark
- The New Testament authors only used this word in two places
 - Here in Luke 1
 - In the Transfiguration (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) where the “Glory Cloud” descended
- Luke is telling us that since the “Glory Cloud” descended on Mary, what was in her womb must be very special as He was dwelling within the Ark of God
- In the Old Testament, the “Glory Cloud” rested on the Ark that contained the Word of God within the 10 Commandments

Luke 1 (Cont)

- Further, this indicates that it was by the Covenant that bound God and man together
- So here the “word of God” has come in the flesh
- Jesus was the “word of God” in the flesh
- He is the new covenant
- He is the God-man *

Luke 1 (Cont)

- **Luke 1:36** *“And behold, your kinsman Elizabeth in her old age also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren”*
 - Luke is trying to show us that Jesus was not just a human king, but He is also the divine king and the “Glory Cloud” that they have been waiting for all these years
 - Next, Luke tells us that Mary was going to the hill country of *Judea* for about three months
 - We saw in **2 Samuel 6:10-12** that the Ark of the Covenant rested in the house of Obed – Edom for three months and the Lord Blesses his house (the women were most fruitful)
 - So here Mary goes to the household of *Zachariah* and *Elizabeth* where *Elizabeth* will spend the end of her pregnancy in the presence of the Ark (the womb of Mary)

Luke 1 (Cont)

- This was not to emphasize Mary, but the fact that she was carrying the “word made flesh” in her womb
- Father suggested that we have trouble explaining our veneration for Mary to Protestants because we often put the emphasis on her rather than who she was carrying
- Further, he said, there was not a single person in Salvation History who had a more important role than hers as the one chosen to receive God in the flesh in order for Him to become man
- These stories in Matthew and Luke are not as much about the specialness of Mary as they are about the specialness of Jesus

Luke 1 (Cont)

- We must understand the specialness of Jesus to understand the special role Mary played in His life
- We have to start with Jesus to understand who Mary is and who we are within Salvation History
- So here Mary goes to visit *Elizabeth* and we hear all this imagery of the Ark to include *John the Baptist* leaping in *Elizabeth's* womb
- This was just like *David* leaping and dancing before the Ark when he brought it to *Jerusalem* in **2 Samuel 6:16**
- Then, we hear the Magnificat which should remind us of:
 - The daughter of Zion from Zephaniah
 - The story of Hanna the mother of Samuel *