



Berean Christian Fellowship

DEVOTIONAL 55.0

December 18
2014

Trust God, Test the Spirits

“Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 1:18).

We often brush over the immense weight of this verse at Christmas time. Mary, a young woman in occupied Israel, began to show that she was pregnant before she was married. To the Jews this meant she could only have violated God’s Law by committing immorality, and she deserved death. If Mary’s situation had come before an Elder, he would have likely taken her outside the city to be stoned. Any Jew would have been “justified” to carry out this sentence on her for the intolerable sin of violating God’s Word.

Mary would have grown up having this Law drilled into her, so she was perplexed when *“the angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end’”* (Luke 1:30-33). Was God’s messenger asking Mary to break God’s Law, for she was not yet married? So, *“Mary said to the angel, ‘How can this be, since I am a virgin?’”* (Luke 1:34). Like the Apostle John, she knew she should *“not believe every spirit, but [she should] test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world”* (1 John 4:1). Before she agreed to do anything in the name of God, she wanted to know how the angel’s words lined up with

GOD’S WORD. People readily take the words of church “gurus” as God’s Word on a whim today without an angel’s encouragement.

Mary showed discernment by testing an angel’s word against God’s Word. *“The angel answered and said to her, ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God’”* (Luke 1:35). Mary had likely heard these very words preached in her synagogue from the Prophet Isaiah: *“The Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a **virgin** will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel”* (Isaiah 7:14). This put her mind at ease that the angel was from God and that this divine pregnancy **would not break God’s Word but actually confirm it.**

Unfortunately, no one else heard the angel, so Mary’s family, friends, and neighbors could only assume she had broken God’s Word as her pregnancy showed. Who would believe her defense that the child she carried was God’s own Son? Think of the fear and worry Mary could have had at this prospect. Even if she avoided death, she would be seen as a sinner and a shameful woman. She would lose her reputation in her community, and her family would be devastated. Mary, knowing how the world would see her, accepted the Lord’s plan and trusted Him. It would have been easier to tell the angel, *“That’s God’s plan? No thanks! I’ll lose my reputation, family, and betrothed over this! Has God thought this out? I’d be killed as a sinner!”* Instead, Mary put her reputation and life unreservedly in God’s hands, trusting Him with her whole self. *“And Mary said, ‘Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word’”* (Luke 1:38a). May we also test the things we see and hear by God’s Word, and may we trust God with our whole selves. Amen.

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