

MARY DID YOU KNOW?

Luke 1:26-45

December 9, 2007 Sunday a.m.

INTRODUCTION

- A. A new holiday trend is literally turning a traditional Christmas celebration upside down. Hammacher Schlemmer, a retail company based in New York, is currently offering a unique yuletide decoration: the Upside-Down Christmas Tree.
- Standing at 7-feet tall and pre-lit with over 800 commercial grade lights, this technological marvel can be yours for the low price of \$599.95. But why would anyone want an upside-down Christmas tree? According to Hammacher Schlemmer's website: "The inverted shape makes it easier to see ornaments, which hang away from the dense needles," while "allowing more room for the accumulation of presents underneath."
- Other retail outlets are following suit, including *ChristmasTreeForMe.com*, which offers 5-to-7.5-foot bizarro trees from \$280–\$504. Even Target is getting in on the action, with upside-down trees ranging from \$299 to \$499 on its website. The retail giant claims that the trees "leave more room on the floor for gifts." Andrew Hard, "Christmas on the Flip Side," FoxNews.com (11-9-05); submitted by Sam O'Neal, St. Charles.
- B. Last week we examined Christmas from the perspective of Zechariah and Elizabeth, the elderly parents of John the Baptist.
1. This week let's continue Luke's story of Christmas by looking at Mary, the mother of Jesus.
 2. There are some notable similarities between Mary and Zechariah.
 - a. Both were visited by the angel Gabriel.
 - b. Both were made a promise concerning a son.
 - c. Both were given a sign to confirm the angel's message.
 - i. Zechariah's sign was muteness.
 - ii. Mary's sign was the miraculous pregnancy of her cousin, Elizabeth.
 3. Mary's story is a lesson in faith. What does she teach us about faith?

I. FIRST, MARY REMINDS US THAT GOD'S FAVOR IS THE RESULT OF FAITH.

- A. Gabriel told her she was favored by God—**1:26-28**.
1. She would be favored with the birth of God's son—**1:29-31**.
 2. She also was favored because of the faith she has already shown—**1:30** "Past Tense Verb".
- B. God's favor, then, is a result of our faith and obedience.
1. Nothing else distinguished Mary in God's eyes. She was a young girl from a poor obscure village in Galilee, yet her faith caught God's attention.
 2. This means regardless of who we are, God can use us too if we have faith.

II. SECOND, MARY REMINDS US WHAT FAITH IS.

- A. First, faith is believing what God says will happen.
1. Elizabeth acknowledged Mary's faith—**1:45**.
 2. Gabriel confirms that faith in God is never misplaced—**1:37**.
 3. Mary's response to the angel's message was an expression of faith—**1:38**.
 4. The author of Hebrews tells us how important our faith is—**Hebrews 11:6**.
 5. Faith, then, is believing God will keep his promises (i.e. **John 3:16 & Romans 8:28**).
- B. Second, faith is active.
1. Mary's faith turned into action—**1:38-39**.
 2. Faith is more than believing in our head. It is active—**James 2:14-17**.
- C. Third, faith is not always the absence of doubt.
1. Mary doubted the angel's message—**1:34**.
 2. Gabriel didn't scold her. Instead he gave her further information—**1:35**.

3. "We are born questioners. Look at the wonderment of a little child in its eyes before it can speak. The child's great word when it begins to speak is "why." Every child is full of every kind of question, about every kind of thing that moves, and shines, and changes, in the little world in which it lives. That is the incipient doubt in the nature of man. Respect doubt for its origin. It is an inevitable thing. It is not a thing to be crushed. It is a part of man as God made him. ... *Doubt is the prelude of knowledge.*"

Henry Drummond from Listening to the Giants. Christianity Today, Vol. 29, no. 17

CONCLUSION

- A. Do we have a faith like Mary's.
 1. A faith that trusts the promises of God?
 2. A faith that is active.
 3. A faith that grows through out doubts.
- B. Is God calling us to express faith in him now?