

Tuesday Evening Bible Study Group Notes

Rev Chris Trinham Dr. Luke and the Healing Miracles of Jesus 23rd September 2003

The Great Physician Himself

Scripture Reading: Luke 1.26-38

Key Verse: "What manner of man is this! for he commands even the winds and water, and they obey him." Luke 8:25b

This is the first of a series of medical case studies preserved by Dr Luke. He was a first century physician, contemporary with Jesus, but not one of the twelve disciples. This study looks at the physician Himself through Luke's record of His miraculous virgin birth and the last study covers the healing of Jesus' own body in the garden of Gethsemane. The others review eight healing miracles of Jesus, which are also included two other evangelists, but which Dr. Luke thought of sufficient value to be recorded also in his gospel. This series covers about two thirds of the cases recorded by Luke. We are not scrutinising the text for medical references, but looking for the purpose behind Luke's particular view of the event, knowing that Luke will contribute amongst other things, his medical viewpoint.

By virgin birth we mean that Jesus was Divinely conceived in the womb of Mary, a virgin, against the course of nature. In this study we do not intend to debate the record, but study it in order to learn from it. Dr Luke in accord with his stated intent (Luke 1:1-4) has sought out the detail omitted by Matthew (Mt 1:23) that we may have confidence. We cannot do better.

The Virgin Birth of Jesus is a

Categorical Imperative. This means that it is necessary for the outworking of God's plan for the redemption of sinful men. If Jesus is to represent us as our high priest He must be one of us, fully man. It is necessary that He be born a man.

If He were to be the sinless substitution for sinful man through the offering of His blood, He must be more than man, for all men, sons of sinful Adam, are born in Adam's sin. It was necessary that He be the Son of God. Jesus is fully man and fully God.

However Luke is not concerned with this argument. He leaves that to his associate the apostle Paul (see for example Romans 5.8-21). Luke is concerned with the historical facts, with what happened. We here are also concerned with the facts.

Mary's Obedience. Verse 28 could read "Be glad. You are well placed. The Lord is with you". v29 This foreign sounding greeting highly agitated Mary as she tried to make sense of it. The words 'blessed are you among

women' (AV) are not found in the earliest copies of the text. Mary was a humble, trusting and obedient servant of the Lord; nothing more. The words 'well placed' or 'highly favoured' are used again in Ephesians 1.6 where they are translated 'made accepted' (AV) and apply to all those who by faith are 'in Christ'. That Mary found grace in the eyes of the Lord reminds us of another earlier servant whom God chose to use. See Genesis 6.8. Look at Mary's statement of compliance in verse 38 and seek to copy her example. There is no biblical evidence at all that she occupies the place given to her by the more orthodox branches of the church. She was used by God at that time and in that place for that purpose and that's all. We should not ever extend this into the present day. Mary can do nothing more for us. God has chosen Jesus Christ alone as our representative before God.

The Angel's Explanation. 'You shall conceive in your womb.' This word for

conceive is used sixteen times in the New Testament, (take 8, conceive 5, help 2 & catch 1). It is mostly used in the sense to take one prisoner. Only Luke uses it for human conception; once with Elizabeth who also experienced a miraculous but not virgin conception, see Luke 1.7&13 then in relation to Mary with Jesus (see Luke 1.24, 1.31, 1.36, 2.21. James 1.15 is a different but instructive application). Had Dr Luke wanted to say that Jesus was conceived through a sperm, there was a word he knew well, the term 'katabole' which in this application means 'the injection or depositing of the virile semen in the womb' (Strong) Luke's choice of words leaves us with the impression that the foetus was taken as one takes a prisoner. (See this use of this word 'taken' in Matthew 26.55, Acts 12.3 & 23.27 etc). Miraculously formed and implanted the pregnancy concluded normally. It was not a sexual experience in the normal sense.

The words 'bring forth' in this verse mean just that. It is translated as bring forth 9 times, be delivered 5, be born 3, be in travail 1 & bear 1 (AV). The pregnancy would conclude normally Mary's question tends to confirm this view v34. 'How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?' Of course she 'knew' Joseph as her betrothed. But the word here means to 'know sexually'. It was Jewish idiom at the time and had been since the earliest

What manner of man is this? He was not understood by the community to which He came. He is rejected by most today. He did not come to conquer or rule. He was born to die. He came to pay the price of man's sin, and make a way whereby individuals may know and come to God. And to as many as receive Him, to them He gives the power to become the sons of God. If you receive Him He will be become your life too. His Divinity in your humanity. John 14.23.

records (Genesis 4.1). She was plainly saying, 'I have had no sexual encounter with any man.' The word means a knowledge borne out of relationship, a person to person encounter. This word is also used of our knowledge of God (see for example Galatians 4.9)

How did this happen? Luke tells us it was accomplished by the creative power of God v35. It is the same word and the same power as in Romans 1.4&16.

It occurred when the Holy Spirit came upon her. This was also normal general bible language to say that the Holy Spirit empowered a person to perform a special task. See for example Judges 15.14, Matthew 12.18, Luke 4.18 etc, and when the power of the Highest overshadowed Mary.

The Overshadow of the Power of The Highest.

This word means to cast a shadow upon or to envelop as in a cloud. There are two other instances in the New Testament where the word is used. First on the mount of transfiguration where Jesus met with His Father encased in a cloud, see Luke 9.34. Second, when the shadow of Peter fell upon the sick as He passed by, and they were healed. So here. As the Spirit of the Lord fell upon Mary like a shadow cast by a cloud, the work was done. That holy thing which was to be born of her is today called the Son of God.

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