

The Mystery Hidden. Part Four.

As we look into the third phase of ‘God speaking’ we arrive at the second member of the Godhead, namely God’s Son. Our reference for this is found in Heb: 1v2. One should read on through this first chapter and into the second. They really are ‘mind-blowing’. However, if you recall, we shall be looking first at what Jesus was to the Jewish nation. We probably, with hindsight ‘see’ things that never even entered their heads. We can see, quite clearly, that what was to the Leaders of the Jews, the END of a very nasty problem, was, in fact, the beginning of the second stage of the creation of man. Mankind was about to have the door opened to the ‘after that’ of man’s creation, i.e, “that which is spiritual.” At this point, I don’t think we can do better than to look carefully at **Lk 1 v 30-8**. The angel’s message, as with the case of John the Baptist, contains an outline of God’s purpose in sending His Son to this earth. We need to take hold of those points and to ‘rightly divide’ them, for as we’ve already seen, not to do so will cause us much confusion and has already done so in the past.

Let’s try and get into the scene, bearing in mind that most of us don’t tend to be aware of having visits from angels every day and I doubt if Mary was any different to us in that respect. That makes it understandable that the angel begins with ‘Don’t be scared Mary, for you have found grace with God’. Now, the basic definition of ‘grace’ is, ‘one who stoops down to do something for another who is unable to do it for themselves.’ What was being told to Mary certainly fits that definition, doesn’t it! We need to note here the ‘positive’ aspect of all that it says. It begins with, ‘Thou shalt’ – and continues in that vein. God is moving and this is how it will be. Mary **shall** have a Son and she **shall** call His name **JESUS**. This name is very important, being the Hebrew name Hoshea with the prefix Jah. This makes its meaning to be ‘God (our) Saviour, or, God Who (is) Salvation. I wonder how many of us are really able to absorb this tremendous fact. When we look at the record of the angel’s visit to Joseph – see Matt 1v18-25, that 23rd: verse is a real eye-opener. Emmanuel; which being interpreted is, ‘**God with us**’. I doubt if we really grasp just what happened in those awesome days. Let’s go back to [Lk 1v32, for here we learn that ‘HE shall be great, and shall be called Son of the Most High God’. This is the Hebrew ‘El Elyon’ and means the Highest. It speaks of the highest, or top, of a pile or stack of things. However, it has to be a stack of the same items. For example, if you had a pile of books, it would refer to the top one, but if it were a pile of books and notepads, the word Elyon wouldn’t apply. Therefore, as we know from scripture that there are no other gods but our God, this has to refer to the very top manifestation of God Himself. Jesus is, therefore, the product of the very highest of God Himself. I find it hard to put God into levels, but this is what is coming through from the Word.

Next we learn that the Lord God will give to Jesus the throne of David, His father through Mary’s physical part of Him, and that He shall reign over the house of Jacob unto the ages; and that ‘of His kingdom there shall be no end’. Mary asks the obvious question, ‘How shall this be, since I know not a man? And the angel answered and said to her, ‘The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee:’ (NB that the ‘Most High’ Spirit would overshadow her!) ‘wherefore also what is begotten shall be called holy, Son of God.’ So, Israel’s God and King would rule over them, unto the ages. It is this angle of Kingship over the Nation of Israel that I want to pursue, for it essential to them and vital to us.

There are just two more points to take note of before we get onto this subject of Kingship, and we find them in Luke chapter one. You would need to read from v57. It is the eighth day of the baby’s life and Zacharias has had those nine months in which to learn that it was not good to doubt the word of God. Those

who came to circumcise the baby were going to name him after his father, Zacharias, but the mother wouldn't have it, saying 'Not so; but he shall be called John'. There was no one in that family with that name so they turned to Zacharias, who was still dumb because of his unbelief. They had to give him his writing tablet. But those nine months had taught him a lot, and he proved it by what he wrote. I don't know if it comes over as positively in the Hebrew as it does in English, but what we read is, 'His name is John.' The matter, seemingly, was already settled; certainly in the mind of Zacharias. God then immediately loosened his tongue and a torrent of prophecy poured forth and set the whole countryside buzzing. There were no more doubts in this faithful old man's mind. He'd watched his barren wife become a mother in their old age, exactly as the angel had foretold, and he was now a believer.

The second point to note is that the prophecy expressly states that the baby shall be known by another designation, i.e, 'prophet of the MOST HIGH.' There isn't a higher level of God that could alter this, even if HE wanted to. What follows is sealed with the HIGHEST authority of God Himself.

What we are able to say is that this ministry of the Lord Jesus openly speaks of Kingship and Salvation. Therefore these cannot be the subjects of the 'Mystery Hidden from the ages and from the generations;' for they were known of in the O.T.

What was it then that was so important to this Jewish nation? We've seen that it was prophesied that Jesus was to be the King of this nation. Yet, as we have seen, they were captive to the Roman Empire, under a king who had no rights to reign over God's People, and also, as it was to transpire, Israel was in no mood to accept Jesus as their King. Yet, it was not a secret thing that had happened in their midst, as we shall now see. The issue begins to develop in a most interesting way. We read of it in Matt: 2, from v1 onwards. Now, I can't tell you much about Wise men, or Magi, as they were known, but I do believe the Word. They – the Magi - had seen 'His star' in the east. Whose star? That of the **KING OF THE JEWS**, and they had come to worship Him. Hence they called in at the palace, looking for Him. Not finding Him there, they moved on again, guided by the star. It was obvious to them that it was Jesus Who was the King, when the star stopped right over His house. It is also obvious that it wasn't an ordinary star because they knew exactly which house it was over. Equally obviously is that it was the bit about 'King of the Jews' that really got to Herod. When the Magi didn't return to him, having been warned in a dream, Herod set out to butcher Jesus, and to be sure that he got Him, he killed all the young males in the town who were within the age limit given by the Magi. As all this is foretold in scripture, the natural assumption is that all is going to plan. That means that the basic issue of Him being 'the King of the Jews', so far as Israel is concerned, is highlighted, by the Holy Spirit, right at the beginning of His story.

There is a second highlighting of the subject found in three of the Gospels. It is the occasion when Jesus rode into Jerusalem and the people accepted that He was King. Each of those three gospels records the account by highlighting the aspects of the life and ministry of Jesus that it is dealing with. For instance, Mark handled his account of Jesus' life from the angle of Him – Jesus – being the Servant of God. This explains the repeated use of the word 'immediately' or 'straightway' throughout his gospel. Servants are there to 'do' what they are told, when they are told. Being as servant doesn't mean that you are a member of a debating society. You are there to serve. Likewise this accounts for the apparently differing versions that we find in the Gospels.

It is at the trial and death of Jesus that this issue of Kingship finally comes to a head, so far as the nation is concerned. The Jewish leaders are so angry and frustrated by what Jesus has been saying and doing, that they decide that He must die. To this end, the High Priest actually prophesies, though I doubt he realised that he was doing that, by stating that it was expedient that one man should die for the sake of the nation. However, the Jewish Leaders have a serious problem and that is that they don't have the authority to sentence anyone to death. Only the Romans are allowed to do that. Therefore, the Jews have to come up with a charge that will carry a death sentence, and then they have to get the Romans to pass that sentence. When one seeks for the hinge in this affair, it becomes obvious that it revolves, at least outwardly, on the matter of Kingship. When we read through the nineteenth chapter of John's Gospel, it becomes clear. We see from v12 that Pilate is set to release Jesus, at which the Jews charge him with disloyalty to Caesar on the grounds that Jesus has claimed to be **King**. As we see from vv's 12-4, the situation winds up to the level of the Jewish Leaders openly rejecting Jesus as their King and replacing Him with Caesar. Twelve times throughout the trial the word 'King' is used. We know how much that number is tied to Israel. It is associated in the scriptures with **Government**, and particularly with the Government of Israel, being stamped right through the nations history. We also find it tied in with the heavens, an example being in the circles or cycles that occur, mean that the 360 degrees involved in every cycle made is divisible by 30 x 12, and that takes us back to Genesis, where we find that these heavenly bodies, i.e, the Sun and the Moon, RULE or GOVERN our time. So to find the word '**king**' used twelve times in this trial points to the fact that the officials of the nation have cast off **God's chosen government**, in the Person of Jesus, and taken, in His place, the head of the ruling Gentile power, namely Caesar. There's more, but I want you to see the stress, once again, made by the Holy Spirit.

What is interesting is the way in which Pilate acts during the trial. This may well have been influenced by his wife's dream which she sent and told him of whilst he was actually sitting on the Judgement seat – see Matt 27v19. Anyway, he seems to swing from his position as Governor, into fear that the Jews might cause trouble for him – Jn 19v12-3 – finally giving Jesus over to the Jews for crucifixion. However, there is one point on which he wouldn't yield to them and that was on the matter of the customary 'accusation'. What the crime was that had brought about the execution was to be written down and placed over the guilty person's head. So, Pilate wrote, in the three current languages, Hebrew, Greek and Latin, "JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS." This didn't please the Jews and they came to Pilate to change it to "**He said**, I am the King of the Jews." Pilate would not be moved and said that what he had written would remain as it was. However, when one thinks it through, the situation was as follows: the Jews had rejected their King and had put themselves completely under Rome. As all kings of the subject nations needed Rome's permission to rule, the Jewish leaders, in their statement, 'We have no king but Caesar,' had, effectively 'dumped' Herod. At the same time, Caesar's representative in Israel stated categorically, referring to the superscription, that Jesus WAS the King of the Jews. When the Jews came to Pilate, wanting him to change that superscription to 'He said ---', Pilate refused to do it, saying, 'What I have written, I have written'. So, the Roman head of the land of Israel, had put it in writing that, from Rome's point of view, - and remember, it was the Roman point of view that counted - Jesus was the King of the Jews. So far as Pilate was concerned, it was for the whole Empire to read, for he wrote it in the three languages that the empire used, namely, Latin, Greek and that of the particular land that they were in, in this case, Hebrew. I don't know what to make of Pilate but, having yielded to the Jews on some points, he nevertheless stuck his neck out on this final one. Certainly his wife was disturbed by her dream

sufficiently to interrupt the proceedings and that was bound to play some part in it all. What we can be sure of, is that once again, despite the anger of men, God's Will was done, to the letter.

There is one other aspect that we need to deal with and, DV, we'll look at it in the next session, but we are at a very important set of circumstances as regards the nation of Israel. They have rejected their true King and placed themselves in a very serious condition. But, even now, they have a merciful God and He hasn't given up on them, as we shall see later. In the meantime, DV, we shall look at another side of the story, for we mustn't miss the impact of the words, "For God so loved the WORLD ----" Whilst Israel are God's chosen People, fortunately for the rest of the world, He loves them too.
End of fourth session.

To be continued.