**Week of December 23, 2018**

**Luke 1:26-31; 2:22, 25-35**

26 And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named\* Nazareth, 27 To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. 28 And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. 29 And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. 30 And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. 31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.

22 And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord;

25 And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. 26 And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ. 27 And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do\* for him after the custom of the law, 28 Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, 29 Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: 30 For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, 31 Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; 32 A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel. 33 And Joseph and his mother marvelled\* at those things which were spoken of him. 34 And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; 35 (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.

**Understanding the Scriptures**

In today scripture we talk about some familiar scripture. Joseph and Mary were from Nazareth, which was a long way from Jerusalem. Jerusalem was the center of Jewish life and worship. Mary was born in Bethlehem and raised in Nazareth. She was young and poor. Based on the class system of that time, all three characteristics would make her seem to be an unlikely candidate for the godly mission of being the mother of Jesus. During his time, a young unmarried girl was usually punished with very severe consequences. God chose Mary because of her unwavering commitment of being a servant. For generations, Mary has been praised because her submission to God was a necessary part of His divine plan of brining salvation to the world. Jesus, a Greek form of the Hebrew name Joshua was a common name which meant – the Lord saves. Just as Joshua had led Israel to the Promise Land, symbolically, Jesus (Joshua) would lead His people to eternal life. It is in the name of Jesus that people receive healing, demons are banished, prayers are answered, and sins are forgiven forever. Joseph and Mary met Simeon at the Temple where Jesus was to be dedicated. Simeon told them what their child would become. Simeon’s song is often called the Nunc Dimittis, because these are the first words if its Latin translation – Simeon could die in peace because he had seen the Messiah. Simeon told Joseph and Mary that Jesus would have a contradictory effect on people. Some people would reject Him and refuse to accept him as the Messiah, while others would accept Him with joy. Because of this fact, Mary would experience the highs and lows of being the mother of Jesus.

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