

Gospel Doctrine Sunday School Lesson

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Slippery Rock Branch

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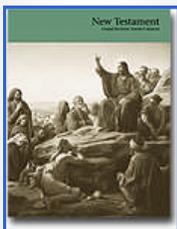
January 14, 2007

Are You:

- Saying Your Prayers Regularly?
- Keeping Attuned to the Promptings of the Spirit?

Today's Scriptures

Luke 1
Matthew 1



Next Week:

Lesson 3:

“Unto You is
Born . . . a Savior”

Luke 2; Matthew 2

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Lesson 2:

“My Soul Doth Magnify the Lord”



The angel Gabriel appears to Mary

Today's Word:

Synoptic—from Greek word *synopsis* meaning “things can be seen together,” as in “Synoptic Gospels”

Questions to Ponder

- How can we remain faithful even when our prayers are not answered the way we wish?
- What does it mean to find favor with God?
- How does the Holy Ghost magnify God in your life?

ELISABETH

Reminiscent of Hannah and Sarah, Elisabeth was far past childbearing years, although she and her husband Zacharias had prayed fervently for children. After the angel's visit to Zacharias, Elisabeth conceived, and in the sixth month when Gabriel appeared to Mary, he told her of Elisabeth's blessed gift, saying “For with God nothing shall be impossible.” When Mary visited Elisabeth, the babe in Elisabeth's womb “leaped for joy,” and the Holy Ghost came upon her.

JOHN THE BAPTIST

“John the Baptist symbolizes to us the final transition from the Old Testament (or old covenant) and the beginning of the New Testament (new covenant). The time of the Law and the prophets had passed, and the time of the Messiah had arrived. John the Baptist, the last legal administrator of the Mosaic covenant, had one foot in each dispensation. Nevertheless, Jesus declared, ‘He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light’ (John 5:35).” (from Holzapfel, Huntsman, and Wayment's *Jesus Christ and the World of the New Testament*, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 2006, p. 63)

MARY

Mary is at once faithful (a virgin) and seemingly faithless (she becomes pregnant while unmarried), humble and yet revered. Elder Bruce R. McConkie reminds us that “God was his Father, from which Immortal Personage. . . he inherited the power of immortality. . . [but] Mary was his mother, from which mortal woman. . . he inherited the power of mortality, which is the power to die” (*The Promised Messiah*, 1978, 470-71). Mary also represents the spotless bride, the perfection we can achieve with God's grace, while still being human and imperfect, but faithful.

ZACHARIAS

Zacharias, who was also quite old, worked in the temple, administering the incense when the angel Gabriel appeared to him and prophesied that his wife Elisabeth would give birth to a son. Doubting and afraid, Zacharias asked Gabriel for a sign to know the truth of this prophecy, whereupon he struck Zacharias speechless. When Elisabeth did give birth to their son, his speech returned after he wrote “His name shall be John.”

JOSEPH

The Book of Matthew starts out with so many “begats” probably because the prophecy for the Savior was that he would come from the line of David, and in their culture, legitimate lineage came from the father's side. Joseph was of humble means and occupation (a *tekton*, meaning carpenter, builder, or possibly stonemason), whose love for Mary was tested. Like those in the Old Testament, Joseph has a dream that gives him guidance and reassurance to wed Mary, as well as knowledge from the Holy Ghost that her son would be the savior of the world.