

## Do you believe that Jesus is the Son of God? April 27, 2014

Before Jesus left this earth, he made certain that his disciples knew who he was. ( See Matthew 16:13). A pastor's primary responsibility is to bring you to an understanding of who Jesus is and to teach you to search the Scriptures for yourself so you can stand before him on judgment day with assurance that you will hear him say "Well done, good and faithful servant." Many will hear the message but not all come to faith.

The rabbis, the scribes, the religious leaders and even the high priests rejected him as their Messiah, the experts in the laws of God who taught the people the Scriptures. In Luke 2, you will find those that grasped the truth of who Jesus is right from his birth. The first ones to believe were Mary, the mother of Jesus and Joseph to whom she was engaged. The angel appeared to both of them and they believed the words for Mary, who was a virgin, knew that she had not been intimate with any man, so the miracle of the virgin birth was a reality to her. Joseph, after debating on how to break off the relationship with Mary because of his perception of the situation, was shown in a dream that he had also been chosen to be a part of this plan of God. He was to proceed with the wedding plans and name the baby Jesus for he would take away the sins of the world. Now these two young people didn't know all the ins and outs of the theology of the Jewish traditions, but they understood the meaning of the words leading them into a walk of faith before God. There were other people who hadn't studied Scriptures who also believed and spread the word that the Messiah had come to the world. Joseph obeyed the commandment to take Mary to Nazareth to pay taxes for the decree came that Jews had to return to their own city. Joseph and Mary, being descendents of King David, went to Bethlehem. Mary, was due to give birth and she would have to ride on a donkey but she wasn't excused from the duty. God ordained that child to be born in Bethlehem in order to fulfill prophecies written in the Old Testament. Hundreds of Scriptures proved that this child was indeed the Son of God that had been promised from the beginning of time. He would come to defeat Satan who had brought sin into our world through deception and lies to our first mother, Eve. In Genesis 3:20, Adam named his wife Eve because she was the mother of all living. Because of the sin of Adam, a curse was placed upon all the earth and the inhabitants of the earth. But in Genesis 3:15, God said he would put enmity between the woman's seed and the serpent's seed and through a woman, Satan's head would be bruised and Satan would bruise the redeemer's heel.

Eve understood this to mean that a redeemer would come through the birth of a son and she looked for her sons to be chosen for this purpose. Yet it was hundreds of years later that Jesus came to the earth through the bloodline of King David, by a young virgin chosen by God. He was given to her to love, comfort, and train and to share the responsibility with a wonderful man named Joseph, handpicked by God. Joseph was chosen because he believed, he obeyed, he didn't question or doubt and he wasn't

influenced by other people's opinions. He obeyed God regardless of his reputation in the community, his family ties or what the neighbors thought about him. He was willing to suffer hardships, and do whatever it took to protect Jesus' life. He was a father to Jesus and willingly took on that responsibility before God. Back to Luke 2:8, shepherds were taking care of their sheep at night. They certainly were not experts in theology for they were farmers. They looked out for their flocks, hunted down the strays and protected sheep from wild beasts and thieves that would steal them from the fields. This particular night an angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone round about them and they were afraid. The angel spoke to them, "Fear not for behold I bring you tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior, which is Christ the Lord." They gave them details so they would recognize the Messiah. "You will find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger." Then suddenly a heavenly host appeared and began praising God saying, "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will toward men." As soon as the angels had disappeared, the men left their flocks and headed towards Jerusalem. They found the babe just as the angels had proclaimed. They believed the message and they spread it far and wide throughout the countryside. They glorified and praised God for all the things that they had heard and seen as reported by angels. They were excited; they believed; they spread the good news; they rejoiced at his coming. (Verse 20).

Joseph and Mary followed the laws set forth by Moses and took Jesus to the temple to offer a sacrifice. There was a man in the temple named Simeon who was devout, a just man who was waiting for the consolation of Israel (comfort for the Jews grief) and the Holy Ghost was upon him. God had revealed to him that he wouldn't die until he had received his heart's desire, to see the Lord's Christ. In verse 28, he held Jesus in his arms and recognized him. He blessed God and said, "Lord, now you may let me depart in peace according to your word for mine eyes have seen your salvation which you have prepared before the face of all people." See Luke 2:25-33. He also told Mary that a sword would pierce through her own soul and that happened when the sword pierced the side of her son, Jesus, Mary also felt the pain of the cruelty of the cross.

In the temple lived a widow who served the Lord daily by fasting and praying night and day, never leaving the temple. She also recognized Jesus as the one who would bring redemption to Israel. Mary and Joseph marveled at the events that took place that day and the Bible says that Mary hid all those things in her heart. Satan used the same tricks in Jesus time that he used in the Garden of Eden to deceive people, the lust of eye and flesh, and pride of life. Read the passages concerning Herod, Judas, Pilate, Scribes, Pharisees, chief priests, and you will understand that they refused to believe because of their own desires and rebellious hearts. Even one thief on the cross refused to ask for forgiveness when it was so close. One understood and received the blessing. "Today you will be with me in Paradise." Just ask! Believe! Humble yourself and God will receive you.