

Title:

Beholding Who Mary Held

Scripture

Hebrews 1:3

Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

Luke 2:7

And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

Opening Thoughts

Today is Christmas Eve and I will spend the morning and afternoon hours with my church family. Tomorrow like most of you I will be with my immediate family. Last night I was with my extended family. I am truly blessed to be wrapped up with each of you. God has been very good to me by allowing me to be packaged together, by His grace, with so many that love God and my family. My Christmas experience is great, because it flows from the God of greatness. All of my enjoyment this time of the year is because Jesus was born and still lives till this day. All the

blessings I receive overflow from the Son of God. Christmas is wonderful! The next couple days will be packed with excitement. A trip to grandma's house, a cooked ham, presents, movies, sleeping, and any other good thing seems to happen near and at Christmas. It is for this cause that I come to you today. These good things can become sour if they snatch our attention from Jesus. Evil is simply good perverted and each of us, especially me, can make good things bad by prizing them in their wrong place. These things can also be sanctified if they are sanctified by our affections on Christ and not things of this world (Colossians 3:2). The message that is in my heart is to remind and teach church that Jesus is supreme and is to be most prized at all times. It is because other things fight for our devotion that we must preach today. It is also because we are weak and are easily misaligned in our affections that I preach today. It is my hope that through the text we have read that we can behold this morning what Mary beheld when she gave birth to Christ in order to set our affections right for the day and events to come. When we behold with earnestness what Mary held the day she gave birth to Jesus we can find true joy in Christ. During this message we will ask and answer "What did Mary see when she Beheld Jesus"?

1. Mary Beheld the Brightness of the Glory of God (Hebrews 1:3a)- When Mary gave birth to Jesus she saw what most all men in the world desire to gaze upon. She saw the God of heaven robed in flesh. She saw the splendid glory of holiness. The Washington Post on Dec 23rd 2012 posted an article that stated 84% of everyone in the world believed in a god or gods. 33% of those are consider Christians, and 33% of that is consider protestant. 90% of the world worship god/gods differently than we do. People want to see beauty, holiness, and power beyond this world so they seek God in their own way. People have sought for God since the fall of man. Monuments and temples are scattered about the

globe in worship to some god. Their minds are darkened by sin and their view of god perverted to the root, yet men seek after God to their own demise. Mary saw what countless others desired. According to Scripture God elected to reveal Himself to fallen people, so He selected Abraham and his descendants from the people of the earth to reveal Himself to. God used visions, dreams, and people to teach fallen man Himself. Abraham's descendants were delivered many times by the outstretch hand of God from enemies and their own devices, given a law, land, tabernacle, and temple. All of this was not enough to save the soul. The Nation of Israel fell to show other nations the glory of God and they fell in obedience to God. God's glory was not recognizable to Israel and the world because the nation of Israel and all men are sinful. Then came Jesus brought into this world and watched over by Mary and Joseph. A Human that is all God brought the exact glory of God to the world. The glory of God that men desired would be delivered to them by Jesus Even when the throne of the nation was occupied by a fraud (Herod), bloodlines watered down, and traditions of true worship eroded Jesus still came into the world as the Seed of David who was the Seed of Abraham who was the Seed of Adam who was the son of God! When you behold the coming of Jesus into the world you behold the brightness of the glory of God.

- a. Why do when desire God- People know the world is dark and full of evil. 84% of the world agrees there is something greater out there than what we see. People want God because they want what is bright and attractive. If you are seeking for God seek no further than Jesus Christ for all that come to God through Him are forgiven and accepted before God.

2. Mary Beheld the Person of God (Hebrews 1:3)- When Tara gave birth to each of our 4 sons it never ceased to amaze me how she gazed at them after delivery. She was exhausted yet full of life as she looked into the faces of our children. In that moment, although in a room full of people, her child had her full affection. Her carrying and laboring to bring them into the world connected her to them in the tightest fashion. What we gaze or stare at and into has our affection.
 - a. Mary labored to bring Jesus into the world as any mother- Joseph more than likely delivered Jesus with his wife. They together saw the person of God, held the person of God, and cared for the Person of God. How could Mary and Joseph long for anyone or anything than God when they were holding Him in their arms?
 - b. Hope in God Causes All other desires to find their place- Mary waited with expectation to give birth to Jesus. When she went into labor she hoped in and hoped for the Son of God to be born. When our hope and expectation is in Jesus alone we can combat the things that want to battle for our affections. When we combat the things that battle for our affections we find our joy filled in Jesus.
 - c. Laboring for God places Emphasis on God (Luke 2:7a)- Mary was a willing participant in the birth of Jesus. God did not give His Son to someone who did not want Him. The circumstances were labor intensive, but Mary embraced it fully and gave birth to Jesus. When all our effort and energy is placed in laboring for God things have a hard time detouring us from our joy in Christ.

Application: What are you beholding today?

3. Mary Beheld the Atonement and Resurrection (Hebrews 1:3c)- Mary did the best she could for Jesus. Her circumstance limited her in some ways, but her quality of love and care for Jesus was the highest that could be found. She wrapped Jesus in strips on clothing and placed Him in a manger. When she looked at her Baby in the manger she saw the atonement for the Church of God. She would raise Him up and watch Him bleed for the sins of the World. If Jesus was not atonement then the celebration of His birth would not be great. His birth is great because His mission of atonement was great!

She not only saw heartache in the atonement, she saw joy in resurrection. He purged sins with His atoning death, and sits with God the Father in the resurrection. Today millions upon millions of people are celebrating Christmas for one reason or another. Sadly, many will celebrate the day with other affections ruling their lives. Is it food, presents, family, or traditions that you look forward to the most? Have these good things become evil because they take your affection away from Jesus? Are these things great things because Jesus has your affection?

When mother's give birth and look at their child they are looking at doctors, lawyers, pastors, engineers, business owners, soldiers, inventors, teachers, mothers, and fathers.

When I first hailed Nehemiah 18 months ago I held whatever he is to be. Mary held Jesus on the day of His birth and therefore held the Lamb and the Lion!

This morning I challenge you to “look unto Jesus” and see “Jesus only” (Hebrews 12:2 and Mark 9:8)