

Bible Study

Monday 4th May

Does God have favourites?

This is the last of the weekly ones, after this we go back to our fortnightly study – waiting for the day we can be together again.

The idea for this study came from the birth narratives in Luke which we had at Morning Prayer this week. (Luk.1.5-20 & Luk.1.26-34)

First of all, two dictionary definitions;-

a sceptic – inclining to doubt: a cynic – inclining to contempt.

Next, it is surely a basic belief of Christianity that God doesn't have favourites. (Gen.1.27; Lam.3.22-23; Jn.3.16; Rom.2.11).

So how come the different treatment of Zechariah compared to Mary?

So I thought we might look at four different situations.

Abraham & Sarah. Read Gen17.1 to 18.15 and Gen.21.1-8 where there seems to be laughter and doubt, what we could call healthy scepticism concerning old age.

Joram & his Right Hand Man. Read 2King.3.1 to 2King.6.33 where both men have seen how trustworthy the “Man of God” is yet one keeps silent and the other is cynical. Both have to wait to see what will happen the next day! Now read 2King.7.1-20. Joram, who had kept silent, sensibly does a double check (sceptic??) before exposing his people to a lethal trap. Right Hand Man (cynic??) has a sticky end.

Zechariah. Read Luk.1.1-20 again where there seems to be a healthy scepticism about old age but no laughter like Abraham & Sarah.

Mary. Read Luk.1.26-34 again where there seems to be a healthy scepticism concerning virginity and no laughter.

So if God has no favourites how come the different results for doubting the word/promises of God?

Abraham and Sarah – no problems

Joram – nothing immediate but eventually came to a sticky end (2King.9)

Right Hand Man – immediate sticky end

Zechariah - struck dumb; which does trouble me as I have a soft spot for him. I understand his doubts and I love his insight as recorded in Luk.1.76-79

Mary – not only no problems but a gentle explanation.

So what are the two main points of this study?

- a) The promises were unconditional and fulfilled. Babies were born and the siege lifted and nobody lifted a finger, it was God's doing. Think of occasions in your own life. Promises are fulfilled not because you are Gods favourite but because see b) below
- b) God is faithful and keeps his promises. See Num.23.19; Josh.21.43-45; Ps.89.34; Mk.13.31; Rom.15.7-8;