

Hear, Hold, Hope, & Have

A PATTERN FROM MARY, MOTHER OF JESUS



One of the amazing things about the Christian faith is that we believe that God speaks to us. Even more incredible is that we believe His Word, the Bible, contains many promises which God makes with us. This is remarkable! The Creator of the universe actually promises *us* things!

In this discussion we're going to look at the life of Mary, Mother of Jesus, and see what she can teach us about hearing from God, holding onto what He says, actively hoping for the fulfilment of His Word, and, finally, seeing God's Word accomplished in our lives.

HEAR



Read: Luke 1:26-38



What does the angel's greeting tell us about where Mary stood before God?

What does her response (Luke 1:38) tell us about her attitude?

What position did Mary put herself in so that she heard from God?

Hearing from God in this context is largely about our attitude. We know that God can and does speak to whoever He wishes, regardless of their spiritual condition, but here we are focusing on hearing from God in a positive way as part of our Christian journey.



Read: Mark 4:9



What does it mean to have "ears to hear"?

This phrase, or variations of it, appear several times through the Gospels and the rest of the Bible. It refers to people who are *prepared* to listen to and accept what is being said.

Mary had ears to hear whatever God would say to her, even if it meant embarrassment, ridicule, perhaps even death; and the risk of losing her fiance.

To hear from God we need to have an attitude like this; one which is humble enough to accept God's Word - regardless of what it may mean for our lives. To hear God we need to be close to Him and be living lives which are striving to be obedient to Him.



Read: Luke 1:38

Mary did not simply accept God's will; her desire was that *whatever* God had purposed would be accomplished through her and in her life.

HOLD



Read: Luke 2:15-19



After seeing baby Jesus, what did the shepherds do?



***Does the Bible mention anything about crowds of people coming to see baby Jesus?
Isn't it strange that there is no mention in the Bible of anyone else going to see for themselves the fulfilment of hundreds of years of prophecy?***

We don't know how many shepherds there were, but after seeing a host of angels in the sky and then visiting baby Jesus themselves, it is safe to assume that even a small number of shepherds could have told a lot of people. Luke 2:17 says that they "spread the word" about Jesus.

We cannot know for certain that others did not visit Jesus, Mary and Joseph, but considering the emphasis given to other events surrounding the birth of Jesus it would seem unlikely that such an event would be ignored by the Gospel writers.



Read: Luke 2:19



***In general English grammar, what does the use of the word "but" usually indicate?
("But Mary treasured...")***

It seems that Mary's response was different to other people's. Having heard the news about Jesus' birth people who should have been ecstatic did nothing but be "amazed."



Read: Luke 2:33; Luke 2:49-51

Mary's consistent response to God's Word and to His promises and to the revelation she was receiving was to "ponder" and "treasure" them in her heart. She didn't dismiss God's Word or forget it; she clung onto it, valued it, and sought to understand it.

HOPE



Read: Acts 1:14

After all she'd been through: seeing her son executed, then rise from the dead and return to heaven - still having not seen and perhaps not even understood the fulfilment of God's promise to her that Jesus would be King over Israel...



***Had Mary given up hope?
What was Mary doing in Acts 1:14***

Mary continued to pray with and meet with the very first Church; this was an *active* hope - not some whim or idle dream. Mary had received God's Word and wasn't going to let it go; she continued to pray for it's fulfilment even when things seemed impossible.

HAVE



Read: Acts 2:1-4

Having heard, held, and hoped for God's Word to be fulfilled, Mary finally experienced it. She didn't see Jesus become King on earth, but with the Holy Spirit was able to experience His Kingdom's rule and power and understand what He had accomplished.

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