



The Announcement of the Savior

Luke 1:26-38

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For the last three December newsletters, we have been examining what the Old Testament predicted about the coming of Christ.¹ What did the Jews expect in a Savior? What did they know about the coming Savior before He arrived? It is easier for us, looking back with the full revelation, to see Jesus in the Old Testament. We have a perspective that allows us to understand how all the pieces of the puzzle fit together in Christ.

It was considerably more difficult, before Christ came, to fully understand everything. Without the perspective that history offers, people would only see what seemed to be “contradictory” teaching about the coming Messiah. How could it be, for instance, that the Messiah would suffer and die, and also reign forever? How could He be “mighty God” and also “a child born unto us”? They had different pieces of the picture.

We began by looking at the first promise of the Messiah back in the garden of Eden, immediately after Adam sinned. That first promise is in **Genesis 3:15**. It speaks of the Messiah’s virgin birth, vicarious suffering, and victory over Satan.

The last two articles in this series have given consideration to what the Old Testament taught concerning the nature of Christ. We have only considered a couple of passages in each article, and I’ll confess, it has been a little difficult to just select those few. The entire Old Testament is about Jesus. Everywhere you turn in the Old Testament testifies of Christ in some manner or fashion.

We have looked at the humanity of the Savior from the Old Testament: His lineage, His sufferings and His rule. All of those things show Him to be the Son of David, King of the Jews.

We have looked at the deity of the Savior from the Old Testament: His origin, His names, and His reign as King. These things show Him to be the Son of God, King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Now we will focus on the announcement of the Savior in Luke 1.

Expectations

By the time Jesus was born the one thing that nearly every Jew had in common, was an expectation of the Messiah. For

¹ These articles have been modified from what was originally a five-part series of sermons titled “*The Long Expected Jesus*” preached in December of 2006. Previous articles in this series are available at our website: kootenaichurch.org.

4,000 years God had made promises concerning the coming Messiah. For the 2,000 years since Abraham, Abraham’s descendants had held on to the hope of the coming Savior. The Jews had a collection of inspired, God-given prophetic revelation that spoke volumes concerning this coming King. All of them were waiting for their promised Messiah/King, Son of David.

That is not to say that all of them expected the same thing. Some of them thought that the Messiah was an “idea” or an “ideal.” The Sadducees, for instance, saw the promises of the Messiah, His suffering and His reign, as needing to be taken in an allegorical or spiritual sense. To them, the Messiah was not a person, but an idea or a principle. They understood the Messianic age not in terms of a datable kingdom, but as a process of becoming.

Others expected a military leader. They expected, and wanted, a King who would come and gather forces, lead a revolt, overthrow Rome, crush the nations with a rod of iron, establish the Davidic Kingdom, and reign forever and ever. We saw in the last couple of articles the reasons for that expectation. They expected this because the Old Testament predicted that the Son of David would be a reigning King.

Others expected that the “Messiah” would be two people: one who would suffer and bear the sins of the nation, and another who would sit on David’s throne and reign.

There were different ideas of what the Messiah would be like, but the Jews were all waiting, expecting, and hoping in God whom they knew would fulfill His Word and send the Savior/King. With all of the background of what we have learned about the Savior from the Old Testament, and with all of the background of what was expected by the Jews, it is very curious to see how the angel Gabriel announces the Savior’s birth to Mary in **Luke 1:26-38**.

We notice in this passage three elements to this angelic visit.

Gabriel’s Arrival

“Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin’s name was Mary. And coming in, he said to her, ‘Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.’ But she was very perplexed at this statement, and kept pondering

what kind of salutation this was.” (Luke 1:26–29, NASB95)

Luke writes, “*In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth.*” Now when we pick it up at verse 26, our first question is, “the sixth month of what?” The answer is the sixth month of the pregnancy of Mary’s cousin Elizabeth. She was the mother of John the Baptist, the prophet who was sent to be a forerunner to the Messiah and announce His arrival. Elizabeth was married to Zacharias, a priest. They were both blameless before God, righteous people, but they had no children. Elizabeth was barren and they were both getting up there in years (v. 7).

Gabriel had already been sent to Zacharias to tell him that his wife was going to conceive. It would not be a virgin conception like Mary’s, nor would it be apart from Zacharias. **Verse 24** says that Elizabeth became pregnant and she kept herself in seclusion for five months. In the sixth month, an announcement was made to a young girl, a cousin to Elizabeth. Gabriel has the privilege of making that announcement as well.

For an angel, this is a choice assignment! You have been waiting 4,000 years for this moment, then you are sent by God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth. It was not the most remarkable or attractive of cities. Nazareth was a backwater town without prestige and reputation. Nazareth was the joke of the day; “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” was the proverb. “What kind of a King comes from Nazareth?” People of political importance were from cities like Jerusalem, Caesarea, Tarsus, or Antioch. Not Nazareth.

The angel was sent to a virgin, engaged to a man whose name was Joseph; and the virgin’s name was Mary. There is a lot of detail in those verses. Mary was a young girl who was betrothed to a man, a carpenter named Joseph. They had not known each other intimately at all. They were engaged. The wedding had not taken place yet. There had been no consummation of any vows.

Luke lists all of the most important information first. She was a virgin; that is the most important thing to know about this whole situation. That is, after all, what the Lord promised to Adam and Eve: “the seed of the woman.” The Lord promised a redeemer who would come apart from the agency of a man. He would be a descendant of Eve, but His bloodline would not be Adam’s.

Mary is engaged to a man whose name is Joseph; he was of the descendants of David. That is an important detail. Joseph would be this child’s legal father. Although not of Joseph’s **seed**, He would be Joseph’s **Son**. Joseph’s lineage went back to David, meaning that as a descendant of David, Jesus could claim legal right to his throne. That is a detail that is going to come into play in something Gabriel will say a little later.

Look at Gabriel’s greeting: “**Greetings, favored one. The Lord is with you.**” The term “favored one” means “one to whom much grace has been given.”

By this greeting Mary “was perplexed.” What is it about Gabriel’s statement that would perplex her? The fact that she was perplexed is an indication as to the type of woman that Mary was. If you read the rest of Chapter 1, you will find out from the way Mary responds to this angelic visit that she was a very humble,

modest, unassuming woman. She calls herself the “bondslave of God” in **verse 38**.

Mary did not see herself as one worthy of such a greeting. “**Greetings, favored one. The Lord is with you.**”

“Me? Who am I? What am I? Why me?” She couldn’t figure out why she was being addressed with such glowing terms by an angel of the Lord.

She was a very young, poor Jewish woman! She was engaged to poor, young Jewish man. They are living in humble, modest circumstances. He is a carpenter, not a king. They are from very typical Jewish families. They live out in this little town of Nazareth. Not exactly the most prestigious of towns. In Galilee, not the most prestigious of regions. Just an ordinary, run-of-the-mill Jewish girl. When the angel tells her that much grace has been given to her and that the Lord is with her, Mary wonders, “Me? Why? How?”

Get this. The mother-to-be of the Prince of Peace, the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, God incarnate, the lady who would carry the Son of God, was living in Nazareth. Nazareth! Not Rome. Not Jerusalem, but a little Galilean town despised by most. It was not even a town mentioned in the Old Testament. The most unlikely of places to send Gabriel to announce the Savior’s birth!

On top of that, she is the most unlikely of people. The womb that would carry the Son of God, the Lord incarnate, the Father of eternity is that of . . . a princess? No. A wealthy heiress? No. A queen? No. Someone of import and nobility? No. Just a virgin pledged to be married to a village carpenter.

So when Gabriel says, “You have been granted much grace and God is with you,” Mary is perplexed at this, because her natural response is to say, “Who? Me? I hate to rain on your parade, Gabriel, but I think you’ve got the wrong girl in the wrong town. You must intend to be talking to a different Mary. I live at 123 Nobody Lane.” She was perplexed at it and kept pondering what kind of salutation this was.

Psalm 138:6, “For though the LORD is exalted, Yet He regards the lowly.” Isaiah 66:2, “For My hand made all these things, Thus all these things came into being,” declares the LORD. “But to this one I will look, To him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My word.” James 4:6, “God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” Mary was such a woman. Humble, contrite of spirit, trembling at the Word of God.

Why the special visit from Gabriel? He explains. . .

Gabriel’s Announcement

“The angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end.’” (Luke 1:30–33, NASB95)

“Don’t be afraid Mary. You have found favor with God.” Gabriel repeats what he has said, explaining how grace had been

given. God has chosen to favor her. Gabriel revealed three things about this child.

A. The child would be a son.

You will conceive and bear a son. The language of Gabriel is intentional. It is the language of the prophets who would speak of this coming Messiah. **Isaiah 7:14, "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel."** **Isaiah 9:6, "For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace."**

Mary, knowing that she was a virgin, and hearing the angel promise that she would "bear a son," would immediately be reminded of the Old Testament prophecies. She may have even remembered the promises of **Psalm 2, "Thou are my Son, today I have begotten you."**

This designation of Christ as the son of Mary reminds us of His very real humanity. Our Savior did not fall from Heaven like a comet. He did not appear as if from nowhere. He was born into this world in the normal course of events, just like you and I were: a baby, a son.

The God of all creation, the One who spoke and the stars leapt into existence, was subject to normal human experiences, and had to learn how to talk. The One who said, "I have measured out the oceans in the palm of My hand," had to learn how to use His hand; maybe He even sucked His thumb. He who is the Bread of Life would now get hungry and have to be nursed and changed. Such is the humiliation of our Lord, to take upon himself flesh and to come in the likeness of men. According to Gabriel, this child would be a son.

B. This child would be a Savior.

"You shall name Him Jesus." The name "Jesus" is the Greek form of Jeshua, or Joshua. It means "God will save" or "God saves." His name is indicative of His office, His function, and what He would be. He would be the Savior of all who believe. He would be the deliverer who would save His people from their sin. So it is appropriate that He should be named "The Lord Saves" or "Jesus."

This was confirmed to Joseph in **Matthew 1** as well. An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. **She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins**" (**Matthew 1:20-21**).

On the night of His birth, angels would appear to shepherds outside the city of Bethlehem and announce it to them, saying, "**I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord**" (**Luke 2:11**).

The Son of Mary is designated as the Savior by the name He is given. Jesus—the Lord saves—*He will save His people from their sins*. It is not that He is a Savior. He is **the** Savior. He is **the** only Savior. There is salvation in no other name (**Acts 4:12**). He

and He alone has come on behalf of God to save His people from their sins. He and He alone is capable of saving. Jesus said He came to seek and to save that which was lost.

The virgin birth was necessary for Him to be a Savior. He had to be a man in order that He might stand in the place of men and die for men, be tempted as a man, live as a man. Yet if he shared in Adam's sin or sin nature, He could not offer Himself up for the sins of others. He had to be the pure, blameless, spotless Lamb of God. The virgin birth could guarantee this one born into humanity would be untouched by original sin: part of humanity, but not part of *polluted* humanity.

To offer an infinite sacrifice for infinite sin, He had to be an infinite Savior with infinite perfection and righteousness. He had to be human to die for men and women, and He had to be God to be powerful enough to save.

He would save by offering Himself for sinners. **Isaiah 53:11-12, "As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied; By His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, As He will bear their iniquities. Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, And He will divide the booty with the strong; Because He poured out Himself to death, And was numbered with the transgressors; Yet He Himself bore the sin of many, And interceded for the transgressors."**

Therefore, the birth of Jesus Christ is the single most important birth in the history of the human race. Christ alone was capable of rescuing men and women from a lost eternity. Therefore, the single greatest mistake that you can make in life is to reject the salvation that is offered in Him. To reject him is to reject God's salvation.

C. This child would be a Sovereign.

Verse 32, "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever and His kingdom will have no end."

He was destined for greatness. Indeed, no individual has been as great. Alexander the Great (thought he was great), Julius Caesar, Nero, the Pharaohs, Nebuchadnezzar, Artaxerxes and a host of others have thought that they were pivotal characters in the flow of human history. They have all proven to be mere window dressing, stage props at best, for this child, this Son, Savior, and Sovereign. All of human history is the stage prepared for the grand entrance of God into human history as a Redeemer and King.

History is dated by His birth. Every event that preceded His birth only served to set the stage for Him. Every event that now precedes His second coming is only rearranging the stage for His entrance again into human history. The rise and fall of nations can be traced to God's plan for salvation in Christ. The eternal destiny of every human being hinges on Christ and His work in salvation. No other figure in human history has proved to be more influential, divisive, or controversial. He is truly the Great One!

He will be called Son of the Most High. That indicates His deity once again. Mary was told that this child would be the Son of

God. He will be called Son of the Most High. **Isaiah 9:6, "For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace."**

And the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever. It seems that we are forced to come back to the Kingdom and the King. The promises of the coming Redeemer were so often wrapped up in these promises of a Kingdom. God promised the Jews that He would establish, through a Son of David, a Kingdom. God Himself promised that this promise could not be altered, changed, or nullified. Every place in the Old Testament where this kingdom is described is in terms of an earthly kingdom reality, with a government established in Jerusalem and ruled over by David's son.

God promised that the Kingdom would be perfectly just, righteous, holy. It would involve mandatory worship of God in Jerusalem. It would be accompanied by a lifting of the curse upon the earth. The earth will be fruitful. There will be peace and no end to peace. All humanity will dwell in safety and security, and the blessings of the rule of God among men will be enjoyed. All of man's needs would be met in a perfect rule. That is what the Old Testament promised. That is what the prophets predicted. That is what every Jew expected, anticipated, and hoped for.

There was only one group of Jews who denied that. They were the Sadducees, the theological liberals, who denied all things supernatural and orthodox. They were a very small sect among the Jews. The rest of the Jews all understood exactly what God promised.

Gabriel revealed that this Son was the promised One who will rule. That indicated to Mary that the baby that she would bear would be this Messiah King, ruler, Son of David, the rightful heir to the throne of David who would establish the kingdom promised by God to the nation.

Micah 5:2, "But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Too little to be among the clans of Judah, From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity."

Remember the prophecy through Isaiah, **"For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this"** (Isaiah 9:6-7).

God always keeps his promises. There is no way that Mary could misunderstand what Gabriel is saying. She did not understand this to be some spiritual kingdom, or a spiritual rule. This is not a reference to Christ as head of the Church. None of that can be read into this passage. Gabriel said what he meant and he meant what he said. This child was a descendant of David who would establish the long-promised and long-awaited Davidic

Kingdom. The government, not spiritual rule, would rest upon His shoulders and there will be no end to His kingdom.

The Son, the Savior, and the Sovereign. What a child. What a King!

Gabriel's Answer

"Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' The angel answered and said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God. And behold, even your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age; and she who was called barren is now in her sixth month. For nothing will be impossible with God.'" (Luke 1:34-37, NASB95)

Mary's question to Gabriel is understandable, **"How can this be, since I am a virgin?"** She is not doubting that it will happen, but wondering **how** it is going to happen? Mary understands basic biology. She knows how these things work. What perplexes her is the mysterious way that this Child could be born without the agency of a man.

Gabriel has just communicated some amazing details. He will be great. He will be God. He will be called the Son of the Most High. He will be the Son of God. He will sit on David's throne. He will reign. He will rule over the house of Jacob. The government will be on His shoulders. He will establish a kingdom which will have no end.

What does Mary ask for clarification on? "How can this be since I have not known a man?" She doesn't wonder about the kingdom, the rule, the house of Jacob, or what the angel means by that. She is familiar with the prophets. She knows what was promised. She understands that she is to bear the Messiah, the Son of David, and she takes at face value that He will rule. She doesn't even wonder how this child could be called "Son of the Most High?" She just does not understand how this miraculous conception could take place.

Gabriel gives the needed answer. It would not be a man, but **"the Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you."** The Spirit of God would literally create a seed in Mary. This would be the seed of the woman spoken of back in **Genesis 3:15**. Just as the Spirit of God hovered over the waters in **Genesis 1** and was the active agent in the creation of the World, so He would come upon Mary and create in her a seed, that she might give birth.

"Therefore, for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God." He will be holy. Since this child is the result of the direct creative power of the Spirit of God, He will be holy. He will be "the Son of God." He is both the Son of David and the Son of God. He is both the son of man, born of a woman, and He is the Son of the Most High, without beginning, **"whose goings forth have been from of old, from eternity"** (Micah 5:2).

He is the son of Mary and the Father of eternity. As the familiar Chorus says,

*Meekness and majesty,
Manhood and Deity,
In perfect harmony, the Man who is God.
Lord of eternity, dwells in humanity;
Kneels in humility and washes our feet.*

*Father's pure radiance,
Perfect in innocence,
Yet learns obedience to death on a cross.
Suff'ring to give us life,
Conquering through sacrifice;
And as they crucify prays, "Father, forgive."*

*Wisdom unsearchable, God, the invisible;
Love indestructible in frailty appears.
Lord of infinity, stooping so tenderly;
Lifts our humanity To the heights of His throne.*

*O what a mystery, meekness and majesty;
Bow down and worship,
For this is your God.*

*Christ, by highest heav'n adored;
Christ, the everlasting Lord!
Late in time behold Him come,
Offspring of the Virgin's womb:
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
Hail th'incarnate Deity,
Pleased as man with men to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel.
Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King."*

Is it too unbelievable? That God should become man? That this Child should be holy? That He should be called the Son of God? That a virgin should conceive? That He would take the throne of David and rule in an everlasting kingdom? **"The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this" (Isaiah 9:7).** Verse 37, **"For nothing will be impossible with God."** Bow down and worship, for this is your God.

Without Wax-

