

THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF JESUS' BIRTH
(Luke 1:26-35)
December 8, 2019

As we begin this Christmas series, we turn to the gospel of Luke for our text. The Angel Gabriel has already told Zacharias that he and His wife Elizabeth would bear the forerunner to the Messiah, John the Baptist. And now 6 months later, the angel comes to Mary to inform her that she will bear the Christ-child. The significance of the birth of Christ cannot be overstated. He is to come and bring salvation to the world. And the nature of His birth is of such a miraculous magnitude that God will supernaturally impose Himself in Mary's conception to bring about the fulfillments concerning the virgin birth. Not everyone could be the Messiah, for the Messiah had to fulfill many specific prophecies in order to prove that He was the anointed one of God. One of those fulfillments was that He must be from the line of David. Another was that the Christ-child had to be virgin-born. Luke records these fulfillments.

I. Mary is informed that she will bear the child (vs. 26-31)

Luke 1:26 Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee, called Nazareth. (27) to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. (28) And coming in, he said to her, "Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you."

A "**favored one**," which is from the verb *charitoo*, same root word as *charis*, "grace," is one who has received special graces or special favor from God. In the NT a believer receives "grace" from God; that is, we are favored by God. But Mary is especially favored, in that she will give birth to the Christ-child.

Now every child born is a miracle of God. And every parent, if his or her heart is right, will burst with great parental joy when their child is born into the world. One doesn't know the feeling of what it is like to be a father or mother until you have become one. It is one of those special experiences one doesn't forget. Multiply that experience many times for Mary who is going to be the mother of the Savior of the world and you can understand her joyous outburst in "the Magnificat" in vs. 46-55. No woman of faith could have had a greater blessing bestowed upon her than this. It was a promise that was always hoped for among the godly women of Israel, that she would be the one to bear the Savior. But for the moment, she is silently perplexed.

Luke 1:29 But she was greatly troubled, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this might be." (30) And the angel said to her, "Do not be

afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. (31) And behold, you will conceive in your womb, and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus.

There are two necessary fulfillments concerning the genealogy of the Messiah. **First**, He must be from the *physical* line of David. Mary, according to the genealogy of Luke 3, is of David's ancestry. Mary is a descendant of David, not through Solomon's line, but through David's other son Nathan. So she belongs to the non-royal line of David. Through Mary, Jesus is of the physical line of David.

But the Messiah also must come from the *royal* line of the kings of Judah, if he is to be a king. Now Mary is not of Solomon's lineage; she is not from whom the royal and Jesus does not receive His regal right to the throne through her. However, Joseph is. Joseph's ancestry runs from David through Solomon, then Rehoboam and through all of the kings of Judah. Joseph's genealogy through Solomon is given in Matthew 1. Through Joseph's lineage, Jesus receives the *royal* right to the throne.

Now there is a perplexing problem that came into existence concerning the royal right to the throne through the line of these kings. When Jeconiah, the last king of Judah, who was of the royal line of David, God gave the following prophecy due to Jeconiah's wickedness:

Jer 22:30 Thus says the LORD, "Write this man down childless, a man who will not prosper in his days; for no man of his [fleshly] descendants will prosper [by] sitting on the throne of David or ruling again in Judah."

When Jeremiah says, "**Write this man down childless,**" it is not that Jeconiah would not have children, he did! But the point is that no child from his fleshly line will sit on the throne of David. Here we are stuck with a Messianic problem. For the Messiah's legal right to the throne comes from the lineage of the kings of Judah, through Solomon's lineage and including Jeconiah, then how is Jesus going to overcome this curse that no offspring of the fleshly line of Jeconiah will sit on David's throne? How is the Messiah going to gain His *legal* right to the throne of David, which must come from the lineage of Solomon all the way down through Jeconiah?

Amazingly, this problem is overcome by the virgin birth. Christ gains His royal right to the throne through Joseph. But on the other hand, He gains His physical or fleshly right to the throne through Mary. Both Mary and Joseph are significant. Jesus possesses the *physical right* through Mary and the *royal right* through Joseph.

II. The greatness of the Christ-child (vs. 31-32)

Verses 31-32 express the greatness of this child who Mary will conceive.

Luke 1:31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb, and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. (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. (33) And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever and His kingdom will have no end."

There are four descriptions used to designate the stature and purpose of this child.

1. "You shall name Him, Jesus" v. 31 (reveals the purpose of His coming)

Heaven-given names always have etymological significance. "Jesus" means "Jehovah saves." This proclaims the purpose of the child who is to be born. He is "YHWH who saves."

2. "He will be great" v. 32 (reveals His reputation)

The term "great" comes from the Greek word *me-gas*—from which we derive the word "mega," "megabytes," "megabucks," "megatons." He will be **MEGA!** Man is quick to give accolades to describe people's achievements, but not God. When God uses the word, it has powerful significance. Christ's impact upon the world would be undeniable. His greatness will surpass all others. *The world will recognize His greatness as one who is without equal.*

3. "He will be called the Son of the Most High" v. 32 (reveals His origins)

His roots are from heaven, not from the earth. You and I begin from earth and hopefully we will ascend to heaven. But Jesus originates from heaven and descended to the earth. And we are merely sons of men, but this one is the Son of **"the Most High,"** lit. (*hupsistos*, "from the Highest").¹ Verse 35 also reads, **"He shall be called the Son of God."** That is, He comes from the Heavenly Father and is divine in nature.

Here the basic thought of "son" must be understood from the ancient Near Eastern frame of mind. To be called the "son of" something is to state the characteristics of

¹The OT used two words that were rendered "Most High": the word *elyown* (53 times; see Gen 14:18; it often had a secular use) which means, "elevated," and the word, *illay* (10 times, only found in Daniel), which means "highest."

that which it designates. A dog begets a dog, a cat begets a cat, and a man begets man. No one has yet to enter our house and look at our dog Nicky and say, “is this your daughter.” Upon a closer look you will notice that Nicky and I have no resemblance. You will immediately notice that she is a dog which means she must have had dogs as parents. When we read that Jesus is “the only begotten Son of God” (John 3:16), it means that He too must be God, for only God begets God.

The Jews understood this and according to John 5:18, they sought to kill Him because **“He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.”** They understood the significance of Jesus calling God His Father. You and I proceed from our parents, but Jesus proceeds from the “highest” being. Thus Gabriel implies, *‘Mary, the reason why you do not need a man in this conception is because He is of God.’* It is the Most High who will conceive His Son in your womb.

As being from **“the Most High,”** is signifies how great His authority is. This word particularly emphasizes the greatness of His authority. He has absolute authority to reign over everything, including authority over the rulers of nations. Nothing is *not* to be under His jurisdiction.

4. “He will inherit the eternal throne of David” v. 32b-33 (His Coronation)

Luke 1:32b “...and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. (33) And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever and His kingdom will have no end.”

The Old Testament had predicted that the throne of David would last **“forever.”** In that it will last for eternity indicates that this was to be spiritually understood. The same may be said concerning His reign over the house of Jacob (Israel). He reigns over the house of Jacob “forever.” Gabriel adds **“and His kingdom will have no end.”** In that these are stated in terms of eternity, whether speaking of throne, house of Jacob, or kingdom, we should understand that we are speaking of a spiritual reign, not an earthly one.

His kingdom does have an earthly impact as we shall see, but none the less, it is fulfilled in spiritual terms, in which we are to see the outward manifestations in the world. The New Testament patently teaches that this was fulfilled when Christ took the throne at the right hand of the Father, thus accomplishing the true fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies concerning the throne of David. Jesus holds the throne at the right hand of the Father forever; and since He holds that throne forever, He is never going to leave it in order to set up an earthly throne in earthly Jerusalem.

And in that He is **“of the Most High,”** it indicates that His position of authority goes further than “ruling in men’s hearts,” although this is the essential way He rules, but also that He *legislates* over *the nations* of the world. Jesus title is **“the King of kings and the Lord of lords.”** It was the purpose of God that the Son would reign even over the governments of the world in righteousness.

Isa 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; ... (7) There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom.

Now in that He is the *Son of the Most High*, there is no one on earth who can rule above Him. Jesus is the King of kings and the Lord of lords. His reign is not merely just over the church, but over the whole earth and over all nations. Stick with me on this one, because this is where I often lose company.

Ps 110:1 The LORD says to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies a footstool for Thy feet." (2) The LORD [the Father] will stretch forth Thy strong scepter from Zion, saying [to the Son], "Rule in the midst of Thine enemies.

The Psalm indicates that the rule of Jesus is both royal and religious; it is legislative and priestly.

Ps 110:4 The LORD has sworn and will not change His mind, "Thou art a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek" ["king of righteousness"]. (5) The Lord [small cased letters] is at Thy right hand; He will shatter kings in the day of His wrath. (6) He will judge among the nations, He will fill them with corpses; He will shatter the chief men over a broad country.

Nations can ill afford to reject the gospel of His rule. Even those who are the "chiefs" or "heads" over the people of a broad land; in other words, vast regions, large kingdoms, will be shattered.

Then *YHWH* says in Psalm 2

Ps 2:8 Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Thine inheritance, and the very ends of the earth as Thy possession. (9) Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, Thou shalt shatter them like earthenware. (10) Now

therefore, O kings, show discernment [lit. “regard instruction”]; *take warning, O judges* [from *shapat*, “you who govern”] *of the earth. (11) Worship* [*abad*, “work” or “serve”] *the LORD with reverence, and rejoice with trembling. (12) Do homage* [lit., “kiss”; “Give highest respect”] *to the Son, lest He become angry, and you perish in the way, for His wrath may soon be kindled. How blessed are all who take refuge in Him.*

Rev 1:5 states that Jesus already rules over “*the kings of the earth.*”

This child is “of the highest” and is to be regarded as both, Savior and Ruler. He is the Savior of individuals who personally invite Him into their lives, but He will be the Sovereign ruler over all of the nations. It is His prerogative to judge or bless the nations as He sees fit.

The laws of nature are the laws of God, whose authority can be superseded by no power on earth. –George Mason, June 12, 1776

Today’s liberals say “You cannot legislate morality.” Such remarks are utter nonsense. Every law that exists is the legislation of someone’s morality. “It is not a matter of *if* morality can be legislated, only *whose* morality will be legislated.” For 150 years in this country the courts upheld “the moral law” as contained in the Bible as our standard as a people. And they revered Christ as the Sovereign Ruler of the world (remember the motto of the American Revolution was, “**No king but King Jesus**”).

III. Mary’s reaction to the angel’s message

Luke 1:34 Mary said to the angel, “**How can this be, since I am a virgin?**”

Mary’s response is actually said in a very peculiar way. The Greek word for virgin, *parthenos*, is not used here and what she actually says in the Greek is “**How can this be, since I know no man?**” The term “to know” was an idiom used when referring to sexual relationships. Mary is saying, “**I know no man sexually** (present tense).” This is somewhat surprising since the Greek translation of the OT never uses this tense when applied to the idiom of sexually knowing another person. Grammarians have recognized this peculiar use. It is one thing to say, “I have had no sex” (past tense), but she actually says, “I know no man sexually” (present tense). She is indicating not only that she has had no sex, but she is not intending on having any sex until she consummates her marriage with Joseph. Thus she asks, “**How can I become pregnant since I am not having sex with any man?**” By saying this, she doesn’t mean that she won’t have relations with Joseph in the future, but she wants to know

how she will be impregnated since she intends to keep herself for Joseph.

She was not expecting to consummate the marriage with Joseph anytime soon. The wording indicates that the angel came to her quite early in the betrothal stage. At any rate, it is a commitment to keep sexually pure until marriage that she is stating.

Luke 1:35 And the angel answered her 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 offspring shall be called the Son of God.

The conception will take place by the power of the Most High. Therefore, this child is far more than a mortal man. All men previously born were mere off springs of the sons of men. But this one is the off spring of the Most High God. He is supremely divine in nature.