

A Family for the Savior

Luke 1:26-38

The Birth of Jesus Foretold

²⁶ In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you."^b ²⁹ But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰ The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³² He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³ He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." ³⁴ Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?"^c ³⁵ The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born^d will be holy; he will be called Son of God. ³⁶ And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. ³⁷ For nothing will be impossible with God." ³⁸ Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.¹

We are all very familiar with this scripture and the announcement of the coming of Christ into the world. But just in case you forgot some of the details, in the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, Gabriel brought the second of two birth announcements. The one before had been to the father of John the Baptist, a priest serving in the temple. As he and his wife were older he found it hard to believe that they would have such joy. This time Gabriel came to a young virgin in Nazareth named Mary. There was variety in his assignments: before he had gone to an old man, this time he came to a young woman; the old man was a priest, a descendent of David, the king; the temple, this time he came a common home;

^b Other ancient authorities add *Blessed are you among women*

^c Gk *I do not know a man*

^d Other ancient authorities add *of you*

¹ *The Holy Bible : New Revised Standard Version*. Nashville : Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989, S. Lk 1:26-38

before he went to Jerusalem, now he came to the small village of Nazareth; before he was met with unbelief, this time he was met with faith.

The people in Judah disdained the Jews in Galilee and claimed they were not “kosher” because of their contacts with the Gentiles there (Matt. 4:15). They especially despised the people from Nazareth (John 1:45–46). But God in His grace chose a girl from Nazareth in Galilee to be the mother of the promised Messiah!

Mary was a “nobody” that God made a “somebody.” In some traditions Mary is so magnified that Jesus takes second place (Luke 1:32). In many Protestant traditions we ignore her and fail to give her the esteem she deserves (Luke 1:48). Elizabeth, filled with the Spirit, called her “the mother of my Lord” (Luke 1:43); and that is reason enough to honor her.

But what do we know about Mary? She was a Jewess of the tribe of Judah, a descendant of David, and a virgin (Isa. 7:14). She was engaged to a carpenter in Nazareth named Joseph (Matt. 13:55), and apparently both of them were poor (Lev. 12:8; Luke 2:24). Among the Jews at that time, engagement was almost as binding as marriage and could be broken only by divorce. In fact, the man and the woman were called “husband” and “wife” even before the marriage took place (compare Matt. 1:19 and Luke 2:5). Since Jewish girls married young, it is likely that Mary was a teenager when the angel appeared to her.

When we consider Gabriel’s greeting, we can understand why Mary was perplexed and afraid: “Greetings, you who are highly favored! Why would an angel come to greet *her*? In what way was she “highly favored” and “greatly graced” by God? How was God with her?

Mary’s response reveals her humility and honesty before God. She certainly never expected to see an angel and receive special favors from heaven. There was nothing unique about her that such things should happen. If she had been different

from other Jewish girls, as some theologians claim she was, then she might have said, “Well, it’s about time! I’ve been expecting you!” No, all of this was a surprise to her.

Gabriel then gave her the good news: she would become the mother of the promised Messiah whom she would name Jesus which mean “God is salvation” (Matt. 1:21). Did you notice that Gabriel affirmed both the deity and the humanity of Jesus? As Mary’s son, He would be human; as Son of the Highest (Luke 1:32), He would be the Son of God (Luke 1:35). “For unto us a Child is born [His humanity], unto us a Son is given [His deity]” (Isa. 9:6).

But He would also be a King, inherit David’s throne, and reign over Israel forever! He was to be the fulfillment of a promise that God made with David in 2 Samuel, chapter 7 and God’s kingdom promises to the people of Israel (Isa. 9:1–7; 11–12; 61; 66; Jer. 33).

Jesus came to earth to be the Savior of the world, but He also came to fulfill the promises God made to the Jewish fathers (Rom. 15:14). Today, Jesus is enthroned in heaven (Acts 2:29–36), but it is not on *David’s* throne. One day Jesus will return and establish His righteous kingdom on earth, and then these promises will be fulfilled.

Did you notice how Mary surrendered? Mary knew *what* would happen, but she did not know *how* it would happen. Her question was not an evidence of unbelief; rather, it was an expression of faith. She believed the promise, but she did not understand the performance. How could a virgin give birth to a child?

First, Gabriel explained that this would be a miracle, the work of the Holy Spirit of God. Joseph, her betrothed, would not be the father of the child (Matt. 1:18–25), even though Jesus would be legally identified as the son of Joseph (Luke 3:23; 4:22; John 1:45; 6:42). Mary knew this meant that some people would think she

had been unfaithful to Joseph and that Jesus was from a sinful act (John 8:41). This was a part of the pain that Mary had to bear all her life (Luke 2:35).

Gabriel was careful to point out that the Baby would be a “holy thing” and would not share the sinful human nature of man. Jesus knew no sin (2 Cor. 5:21), He did no sin (1 Peter 2:22), and He had no sin (1 John 3:5). His body was prepared for Him by the Spirit of God (Heb. 10:5) who “overshadowed” Mary. The words used in the Greek are the words that are applied to the presence of God in the holy of holies in the Jewish tabernacle and temple (Ex. 40:35). Therefore Mary’s womb became a holy of holies for the Son of God!

The angel ended his message by giving Mary a word of encouragement: her aged relative Elizabeth was pregnant, proving that “with God nothing shall be impossible.” These are the same types of words given to Abraham when God announced the birth of Isaac (Gen. 18:14). The point is that God can do anything, God had no limitations as we understand limitation. Job (Job 42:2), Jeremiah (Jer. 32:17), and even Jesus himself (Matt. 19:26) witnessed to this fact. Remember spoken word of God has power. In the 1901 *American Standard Version*: “For no word of God shall be void of power.” God accomplishes God’s purposes through the power of His Word (Ps. 33:9).

Mary’s believing response was to surrender herself to God as God’s willing servant. She experienced the grace of God (Luke 1:30) and believed the Word of God, and therefore she could be used by the Spirit to accomplish the will of God. In a household of that culture a “handmaid” was the lowest kind of female servant, which shows how much Mary trusted God. She belonged totally to the Lord, body (Luke 1:38), soul (Luke 1:46), and spirit (Luke 1:47).^{2 3}

²Wiersbe, Warren W.: *The Bible Exposition Commentary*. Wheaton, Ill. : Victor Books, 1996, c1989, S. Lk 1:26

³Walvoord, John F. ; Zuck, Roy B. ; Dallas Theological Seminary: *The Bible Knowledge Commentary : An Exposition of the Scriptures*. Wheaton, IL : Victor Books, 1983-c1985, S. 2:205

Mary's submission is a very lovely thing. "Whatever God says, I accept." Mary had learned to forget the world's commonest prayer—"Thy will be *changed*"—and to pray the world's greatest prayer—"Thy will be *done*."⁴

The question for us...would our home, our family be a good place for Jesus? Is your home a good place for Jesus? After all, Jesus continues to live among us as Christians walk in his foot steps and are obedient to his teachings! Mary was a good example for us to follow! (Rom. 12:1–2). So what are the characteristics of the life of Mary and that of Joseph the man who raised Jesus to manhood? I looked up on the Internet some of the characteristics that stand out. Mary was "good woman" and contemporary people could have related to her. She would have been accepted in the Occupy Wall Street group as she was from humble beginnings. She did not think of herself as better than others. She was obedient. She was a woman of compassion and she taught her children to be the same. Even when she and Jesus' siblings thought Jesus was having mental health issues, they came to take care of him and hopefully removed him from the crowds and his over-working. One writer said her hair would have been covered to show modesty and virtue which is still common in practice today in Islam.⁵

Another writer reminded us that even with God's favor, Mary would still suffer much. Though she would one day be highly honored as the mother of the Savior, she would first know disgrace as an unwed mother. She would nearly lose her fiancée. Her beloved son would be rejected and cruelly murdered. Mary's submission to God's plan would cost her dearly, yet she was willing to be God's servant.

⁴ Barclay, William, lecturer in the University of Glasgow (Hrsg.): *The Gospel of Luke*. Philadelphia : The Westminster Press, 2000, c1975 (The Daily Study Bible Series, Rev. Ed), S. 11

⁵ http://wiki.answers.com/Q/Characteristics_of_mary_mother_of_Jesus

God knew that Mary was a woman of rare strength and obedience. She was the only human being to be with Jesus throughout his entire life — from his birth until his death. She gave birth to him as her baby and watched him die as her Savior. Mary also knew the Scriptures. When the angel appeared and told her the baby would be God's Son, Mary replied, "I am the Lord's servant ... may it be to me as you have said." (Luke 1:38). She knew of the Old Testament prophecies about the coming Messiah.⁶

And what do we know about Joseph? Joseph was a man of strong conviction who lived out his beliefs in his actions. He was described in the Bible as a righteous man. Even when personally wronged, he had the quality of being sensitive to someone else's shame. He responded to God in obedience and he practiced self-control. Joseph is a wonderful biblical example of integrity and godly character.⁷

So the question remains, would your house make a good home for the savior. Are you like Mary, humble, modest, and compassionate? Are you like Joseph, a man of conviction, integrity and godly character? If not, by inviting Jesus into your life, you can become all you can be....an appropriate family for the Savior. Won't you invite him in?

⁶ <http://christianity.about.com/od/newtestamentpeople/p/marymotherjesus.htm>

⁷ <http://christianity.about.com/od/newtestamentpeople/p/josephprofile.htm>