

Jesus's Birth Foretold

Introduction * LONDON PREGNANCY AND FAMILY SUPPORT CENTER

- Other angelic birth announcements: to Hagar about Ishmael; to Sara about Isaac, to the wife of Manoah about Samson; to Hannah about Samuel; and to Zechariah concerning John
- All these births were significant births which impacted the nation of Israel
- But this birth announcement, though similar in many ways to the others, goes way beyond the miracles of the others and the child born is great far beyond the others
- This magnificent birth announcement brings together incredible ideas: the coming of God, the coming of a King, the fulfilment of Israel's hope, the creative power of God and His Spirit, the utter uniqueness of a virgin birth, and the certainty of God's Word and His power
- This is the birth announcement of Jesus, the Son of God

Luke 1:26-38ESV

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary.²⁸ And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" ²⁹ But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting 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 call his name 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 father David,³³ and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

³⁴ And Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?”

³⁵ And the angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. ³⁶ And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. ³⁷ For nothing will be impossible with God.” ³⁸ And Mary said, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.

God will deliver His Son by the Holy Spirit that Mary might deliver a son, Jesus, who is the fulfilment of God’s promise of a royal, Davidic, and Messianic king. This Christmas we should respond even as Mary did, with humble faith.

The Messenger – 26-27

Setting the scene for the message physically and prophetically

Physically:

- Nazareth in the region of Galilee – 45-85 miles north of Jerusalem
- Mary – a virgin betrothed to Joseph is the recipient of the message

Prophetically: *the opening lines of this passage are much more significant when we consider their prophetic significance*

- Gabriel – as one who stands in God’s presence and has direct access to God, the message is both credible and one of great import, Gabriel is connected to eschatological event^s suggesting the prophetic nature of the message
- Joseph – he is the link to David and the line of David is ^{steeped}pregnant with prophetic importance
- Nazareth – is important prophetically as well: **Matthew 2:23 ESV** And he went and lived in a city called Nazareth, so that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, that he would be called a Nazarene. Root word of Nazareth is ^{shoot}pointing to: **Isaiah 11:1-2 ESV**

- NO EXACT PROPHECIES

¹There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.

²And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him,
the Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and might,
the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.

We anticipate something prophetically significant in the message that is to come. There are hints that it will involve the Davidic hope in some way.

The Message Part 1 – 28-29

The first part of the message reveals the motivation behind the message

And he came to her and said, “Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!”

- Favored one = recipient of God’s grace = the special object of God’s favor
- His favor particularly expressed with His presence – God is at her side
- Some early translations render this line “Hail! Full of grace, your Lord is with you.”
- But Mary is not the originator of grace, or even the dispenser of grace; if she is full of grace it is because she is a receptacle of grace, *the grace of God*
- The motivation behind the message that Mary will hear from the messenger Gabriel is GRACE!! - *God's own desire to bless, to show love*

This message of God’s grace and presence left Mary “**greatly troubled at the saying**” and she “**and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be**”

Follow your being greatly troubled with being discerning

- Mary understood what many of us fail to understand: God's grace is baffling and bewildering! Why should we EXPECT it?
- The favor of God directed to any human, even the best of humans, should be at best unexpected and at worst, terrifying
- But here it is: Mary is a recipient of the grace of God and she will soon have it explained to her just why that greeting was used by Gabriel

J. C. Ryle, the first Anglican bishop of Liverpool, said: *draws our attention to the favour God shows Mary*

"We should notice ... the high privilege of Mary. The language which the angel Gabriel addresses to her is very remarkable. He calls her "highly favored." He tells her that "the Lord is with her." ... we must in fairness admit, that no woman was ever so highly honored as the mother of our Lord. It is evident that one woman only out of the countless millions of the human race, could be the means whereby God would be "manifest in the flesh" — and Mary had the mighty privilege of being that one. By one woman — sin and death were brought into the world at the beginning. By the child-bearing of one woman — life and immortality were brought to light when Christ was born. No wonder that this one woman was called "highly favored" and "blessed."

One thing in connection with this subject should never be forgotten by Christians. There is a relationship to Christ within reach of us all — a relationship far nearer than that of flesh and blood — a relationship which belongs to all who repent and believe. "Whoever shall do the will of God," says Jesus, "the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."

"Blessed is the womb that bore you," was the saying of a woman one day. But what was the reply? "Yes! rather blessed are those who hear the word of God, and keep it." (Mark 3:35; Luke 11:27.)

As highly favoured and as uniquely blessed as Mary was in giving birth to Jesus, God's grace extends to all who will humbly believe and trust in His Son with the much greater privilege of union with Him. We ought to accept this grace and we ought to be amazed at it!

Accept:

GOSPEL - God's grace comes at you in a greater way than it came to Mary...

You are separated because of sin which is an affront to the God who created you... But he sent his Son ... **HUMBLY BELIEVE**

The Message Part 2 – 30-34

Having received the context of the message—both physical and prophetic—and having been made aware of the motivation behind the message through Gabriel’s greeting, we now get to the heart of the message. And the message is this: a child will be born to you and he will be great!

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 call his name 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 father David, ³³ and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

The phrase “found favor with God” is attributed to other people in the Bible: Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Gideon, Hannah, and David. But the favor they received often came at the request of someone who promised something in return. But with Mary, no request was made, the favor was freely given – there was no need to fear: “Do not be afraid” the angel begins.

The presence and grace of God will result in Mary conceiving a son whom she will name Jesus

This is reminiscent of Isaiah’s prophecy: **Isaiah 7:14 ESV** Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

Whether Luke was alluding to that or not the greatness of this child is perceived in his name: Jesus; Joshua; the Lord is salvation!

The angel then conveys the substance of the message: a prophetic declaration that links the child to the royal, Davidic Messiah that Israel had been waiting for: the angel describes the role, the realm, and the reign of this child

The child's role will be one of greatness as the **"Son of the Most High"**

The realm and reign of this great Son of the Most High will be the complete fulfilment of God's promise to David: **1 Chronicles 17:11-14 ESV** ¹¹ When your days are fulfilled to walk with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, one of your own sons, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹² He shall build a house for me, and I will establish his throne forever. ¹³ I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. I will not take my steadfast love from him, as I took it from him who was before you, ¹⁴ but I will confirm him in my house and in my kingdom forever, and his throne shall be established forever."

Solomon fulfilled some of that promise, but Jesus would completely fulfill it because **"the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, ³³ and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."**

Jesus's role is that of great Son, his realm is the nation of Israel, and his reign would be eternal!

God's response to the fear and bewilderment of Mary was to expound on the greatness of the Son of the Most High! How do we respond to bewilderment and fear? By expounding our own greatness.

This Christmas, when you experience troubles, conflicts, or difficulties, don't respond by magnifying your own importance...rather fight the temptation by looking and loving the greatness of Christ.

When someone lets us down = don't they know how important I am
When something bad happens = why is this happening to me?

Mary again follows the angelic pronouncement with a response of her own: **"And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?""**

As opposed to Zechariah, who we will hear about in a few weeks, Mary does not display doubt in the angel's message by asking for a sign. Rather, in asking for an explanation she implies belief. *How does this work?*



I'm going to take you to Disneyland? Show me the tickets vs. how will we get there

Because her question arises out faith, despite the spectacular message she has been given, the angel proceeds with his message.

The Message Part 3 – 35-38

The final part of the angel's message reveals the details of the God's plan to bring Israel's Messiah into life on earth.

How will Mary conceive the Son of the Most High, the royal, messianic, Davidic king? By direct, Divine involvement: **"And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God."**

Jesus will be, in the words of **Bishop Ryle**, "a human being of whom God is the immediate author."

The overshadowing of God is another reference to His presence which will come upon Mary in the Holy Spirit who, as he is God himself, is the active, life-giving agent of God's creative power

Do we recognize, again in **Bishop Ryle's** words, "the prominent place assigned to the *Holy Spirit* in the great mystery of the incarnation"? **Ryle** notes,

"In every step of the great work of man's redemption — we shall find special mention of the work of the Holy Spirit.

Did Jesus die to make atonement for our sins? It is written that "through the eternal Spirit, He offered himself without spot to God." (Hebrews 9:14.)

Did Jesus rise again for our justification? It is written that He "was quickened by the Spirit." (1 Peter 3:18.)

Does Jesus supply His disciples with comfort between the time of His first and second coming? It is written that the Comforter, whom He promised to send is "the Spirit of truth." (John 14:17.)

Let us take heed that we give the Holy Spirit the same place in our personal religion, which we find Him occupying in God's Word.

Let us remember that all that believers have, and are, and enjoy under the Gospel — they owe to the inward teaching of the Holy Spirit.

The work of each of the three Persons of the Trinity is equally and entirely needful to the salvation of every saved soul. The ELECTION of God the Father, the REDEMPTION of God the Son, and the SANCTIFICATION of God the Spirit — ought never to be separated in our Christianity."

It seems to me, that though we are professing Trinitarians, the way we talk about our faith indicates our trinity is composed of only two persons: God the Father and God the Son. Let this Christmas be a Trinitarian Christmas. *This Christmas be alert for how the Holy Spirit played and plays a role in the initiating of Christ's salvation!!*

Mary doesn't ask for a sign, but God gives her one anyway: "Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For nothing will be impossible with God."

Finally, we see Mary's humble faith in God: "'Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.'"

let's let this be our disposition!!