

# The Announcement of Jesus' Birth

📖 Luke 1:26-38

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Last week we looked at the announcement of John's birth. Luke informs us in 1:5 that it was in the days when Herod the Great was ruling as king of Judea that there was a priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah, who had a wife Elizabeth, who was also a descendant of Aaron. In 1:6, they both lived righteous lives in the sight of God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and requirements of the Lord, meaning they lived their lives according to the Mosaic rule of life and brought the proper sacrifices. Even so, in 1:7, they had no child. The reason was not because they were to blame, but because Elizabeth was barren and now they were both old. In 1:8-9, it happened that when Zacharias went up to Jerusalem for his biannual priestly service, that the lot was cast and he was chosen for the highest duty, that of offering the burnt incense in the Holy Place. In 1:10, it was likely the evening offering, which was well-attended, because the whole multitude of people were praying outside. In 1:11, while he was offering the incense, an angel of the Lord appeared on the right side the incense altar. In 1:12 Zacharias was confused and greatly afraid. In 1:13 the angel comforted him by telling him that his petition for a son offered decades before had been heard and his wife Elizabeth was now going to bear a son and that he should name him John. In 1:14, this son would bring great personal joy and gladness, and many, though not all the nation Israel, would rejoice. The many who would rejoice would be the remnant. In 1:15, he would be great in the sight of the Lord, he would drink no wine or liquor, showing consecration for service to the Lord, and he would even be filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother's womb, a detail we will discuss a bit more in a minute. As far as the results of his ministry, 1:16 says he would turn many of the sons of Israel back to the Lord their God. In 1:17 it is revealed that he would be the forerunner who would go before the Lord with the same spirit and power as Elijah. He was not Elijah, but his ministry would be similar to Elijah's and have similar results. These results are described next, he would turn the hearts of the father's back to the children and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous. It's natural that when people return to the Lord they mend broken family relationships and take on the attitude of the righteous. In the end there would be a remnant of Israel that would be prepared for the Lord. In 1:18, Zacharias expresses his unbelief, saying, "How will I know this for certain?" For I am an old man and my wife is advanced in years. He was looking for a sign that what the angel said was true. Consequently, in 1:20, the angel identified himself as Gabriel, the one who stands in the direct presence of God and explains that he had been sent by God with this message. And that because Zacharias did

not believe he would now be both deaf and mute until the son was born. In 1:21, the people were waiting outside and wondering why it was taking Zacharias so long. It was normally a very short procedure so that the people did not begin to worry. At last when he came out, in 1:22, he was unable to speak and so he began making signs and the people deduced that he had seen a vision. He then kept making signs in an attempt to communicate the message of the vision, but he was unsuccessful. In 1:23, after he finished that week's priestly service he went back home. In 1:24, sometime after, presumably not long after, Elizabeth did conceive and she kept herself hidden away for five months. 1:25 explains that the reason was because the Lord had taken notice of her disgrace among men and had removed her disgrace. This caused her to be in awe and humility before Him. Now at this point the way is cleared for the announcement of another supernatural birth, the birth of Jesus, but before we look at it we want to comment a bit about the filling of John the Baptist by the Spirit from birth.

As I mentioned last week, I think it's best to say that John would be filled from the actual day of his birth and not while still in the womb. The Greek says *εκ κοιλιας*, meaning "out from the womb," and not "in the womb." But in either case this is a unique description. No one in the OT or NT is ever said to be filled with the Spirit from the womb. The first notion I want to dispel is that this means that John must have been a believer from the womb. There is no Scriptural indication that being filled with the Spirit necessarily means being a believer. It's true that in the NT believers are commanded to be filled by the Spirit. But in the NT no believer is commanded to be filled by the Spirit. The Spirit filled people sovereignly in the OT. Prophets, priests and kings were filled by the Spirit to be enabled for their ministry. This did not mean they were all believers. In fact, in the southern kingdom of Judah, the line of kings were all descended from David and all were anointed. The Spirit came upon all of them but most of them were bad kings and only about nine were good kings. The Spirit coming upon them did not mean they were all believers. It simply meant that He empowered them for their kingly service. This is very likely the meaning of filling in the OT. The OT uses a different word for "filling" than we read in the NT where we are commanded to be filled by the Spirit. This difference merits seeing some difference. I think the way we are supposed to understand the filling of John from the womb is in terms of his unique role in the plan of God. The entire section illustrates how there was a supernatural revelation of his birth, a supernatural birth through an old man and an old barren woman, a supernatural result of his ministry and so forth. Everything about John is unique and supernatural. The filling is also a unique and supernatural filling. What the Spirit did from the womb was aid in his development and formation into the role of forerunner of the Messiah. This is not unknown in the OT, as Jeremiah was worked with from in the womb as a preparation for his ministry as a prophet. As far as when John became a believer, he became a believer as any of the rest of us would, when he understood God's plan of salvation and believed in the coming Messiah. The significant point is to not read the NT idea of filling with the Spirit back into the OT. God worked differently in the OT than He does now and the meaning of filling is not identical.

Tonight we come to a second birth announcement, that of Jesus, Luke 1:26-38. As mentioned last week, there are many comparisons between the announcement of John's birth and the announcement of Jesus' birth. In

both instances the angel Gabriel makes the announcement. In both instances a parent is surprised. In both instances a woman who is childless gets pregnant. In both instances it is a supernatural pregnancy. But there are also contrasts. In the announcement of John, it is the father, Zacharias, who receives the revelation, whereas in the announcement of Jesus, it is the mother, Mary. In the announcement of John, the revelation took place in the temple in Jerusalem, but in the announcement of Jesus, the revelation took place in Nazareth, a small city in the Galilee. In the announcement of John, Zacharias does not believe, but in the announcement of Jesus, Mary does believe. In the announcement of John, the revelation is that he will be great, but in the announcement of Jesus, He will be greater. In the announcement of John, the woman who conceives is not a virgin, but in the announcement of Jesus the woman who conceives is a virgin. So there are comparisons as well as contrasts. What the comparisons do is link John and Jesus. What the contrasts do is distinguish John and Jesus. Both are important for understanding the plan of God. The style continues to be Hebraistic, so we assume that Luke wrote this record either from notes others took from personal interviews with Mary or from his own personal interviews with Mary.

In 1:26 we read, **Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth.** The reference to **the sixth month** is taken by some to refer to **the sixth month** of the Jewish calendar, and thereby used to date the birth of Christ. However, **the sixth month** is not a reference to the Jewish calendar but to Elizabeth's pregnancy referred to in 1:24. She spent the first five of those months in seclusion, then she came out in public and within the sixth month the **angel Gabriel** was sent on another mission. Because **Gabriel** was sent on each mission, it would be confirmation that the things spoken to Zacharias and to Mary were true. It would also link the two offspring, John and Jesus, in their mission and purpose. This time the **angel Gabriel** was not sent into the heart of Jewish life, the Temple in Jerusalem, but **to a city in the Galilee called Nazareth.** Now it is a little interesting that Luke would refer to **Nazareth** as a **city**, since it was very small. Fruchtenbaum said, "In the first century, Nazareth was an insignificant place, overshadowed by the neighboring town of Sepphoris (*Zippori*), a short distance away. In fact, it was so insignificant that there is no mention of Nazareth in the Hebrew Bible, in rabbinic writings, or in Josephus...." How then can we explain that Luke referred to it as a **city**? Constable said, "He may have generously called Nazareth a city (Gr. *polis*) to give it status in the eyes of his readers."<sup>1</sup> However, this does not seem like the best explanation. MacArthur explained that the "Greek word translated city actually refers to a population center as opposed to a rural area, regardless of size." So while **Nazareth** was very small, probably having a population of around 2,000 at the time of Jesus' birth, it was referred to by Luke as a **city** simply because it was a population center and not a rural area. Luke added that it was **in the Galilee** so that they would know the general region the city was located. And as far as its geographic location today, it is undisputed that the modern city of Nazareth is in the same location as the ancient city. So in a very small town, known only to a few, this announcement would be made. However, interestingly, there is some evidence that the inhabitants of Nazareth were descendants of the house of David. Ron Allen said, "These were the Natsoreans, a Judean family that proudly identified its Davidic lineage and spoke

of itself as “the Branch Clan,”...The people in this town had the idea that Messiah, the Branch, would be born from among them....To other Jewish people in larger, older cities, the Natsoreans must have seemed silly in their assumed self-importance. Their little town could not have seemed more distant from the glories of the Davidic Kingdom in ancient days.”

In verse 27, the angel Gabriel was sent **to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David, and the virgin's name was Mary.** The word **virgin**, in the Greek is from *παρθενος* and never refers to a married woman or a woman who has already had sexual relations. It therefore, refers to a virgin in its purest sense. This **virgin's name was Mary**, which is the equivalent of the Hebrew Mariam, sometimes translated Miriam. She was **engaged to a man whose name was Joseph.** However, the translation **engaged** is misleading for modern English readers. Technically this was the “betrothal.” The main difference between an engagement and a betrothal is that a betrothal was legally binding such that if there was any foul play during the betrothal period it was considered adultery or if the man died the woman was considered a widow. The betrothal, therefore, was much stronger than an engagement because it involved legal issues. In Jewish marriage customs, there were two stages. The first stage was the betrothal, it involved a formal witnessed agreement to marry and the giving of the bridal price. In the 1<sup>st</sup> century, this could happen as early as 12 years of age. When it took place, the woman belonged to the husband and was legally called his wife. It was during this period that the angel Gabriel was sent to Mary. The second stage was the marriage ceremony itself which usually took place about a year later. The year delay was not only for preparations but also to ensure the woman was pure. We don't know Mary's exact age when she was betrothed, all we know is that she was **a virgin.** The man she was betrothed to is identified as **Joseph**, and the important note is made that he was **of the descendants of David.** This meant that **Joseph** had Davidic throne rights. However, because he was under the Coniah Curse, he could not exercise those rights. Jesus, therefore, could get His Davidic throne rights through **Joseph** by adoption, but being born of a virgin He could also exercise those rights. Constable said, “Luke identified Joseph as a descendant of David. He evidently considered Jesus a legitimate heir to David's throne by the right of adoption (cf. 3:23). Joseph adopted Jesus as his son, and Jesus thereby qualified to inherit as a legitimate son of Joseph. This fact has important bearing on the promise in verse 32b.”<sup>2</sup> The main point here and in verse 32, and the reason **Joseph's** descent from **David** is noted, is so we know that Jesus received his throne rights from **Joseph** and could rightfully sit on “the throne of His father David and...reign.”

In verse 28 the angel Gabriel arrives in Nazareth, **And coming in, he said to her, “Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.”** Now this verse has suffered a lot of abuse at the hands of the Roman Catholic Church. So we will interact with that as we work our way through. First, the word **Greetings** is a common form of address meaning something like “good day.” The angel was telling Mary “good day” because of the revelation he was sent to give her that she would conceive the Messiah. However, the Roman Catholic Church translates this word as “hail” as a form of praise to Mary based on their misinterpretation of the rest of the verse as a description of Mary's sinlessness. It's from this first word that they get the Catholic prayer known as the *Ave Maria*, or “Hail

Mary." But it is not a praise of Mary but simply a common address meaning something like "good day." Second, the angel referred to her as the **favored one**. The Greek word translated **favored one** is *κεχαριτωμενη* which is only used twice in the NT. Here it is used of Mary and in Eph 1:6 it is used of all believers. It means to bestow a favor upon someone. In this context it means God was bestowing a favor upon Mary. In Eph 1:6 it means God is bestowing a blessing upon all believers. The blessing upon Mary is that she would be the woman to give birth to the Messiah. However, the Roman Catholic Church got their theology of this word from the Latin Vulgate, which translates *gratia plena*, meaning "full of grace." That's why in the *Ave Maria* they say, "Hail Mary, full of grace." They view Mary as sinless and as full of grace and so she is able to bestow grace upon others who call upon her in the *Ave Maria*. But the word does not mean that Mary was full of grace. It means that God had bestowed grace upon her. Mary herself was a sinner like all the rest of us and in need of a Savior. She herself admits this in verse 47 where she says, "My spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior." So Mary was in need of salvation just like anyone else. Now, the Roman Catholic Church goes one step further by positing that since Mary was full of grace and sinless, there has to be an explanation for how she became sinless. They answer by the doctrine of the immaculate conception. In this doctrine they claim that Mary was conceived sinless. And from there they claim to easily explain how Jesus was born sinless; it was because His mother Mary was sinless. And because of this false doctrine Roman Catholicism has postulated another false doctrine, that Mary is the co-redemptrix, that she and Jesus together redeem humanity. Roman Catholicism is highly logical. It just isn't biblical. Once it starts going down a wrong path, it follows it to its logical end. But the text gives no indication of any of these things; Mary was not being praised by Gabriel, merely given a common greeting, Mary was not being said to be full of grace, merely that a blessing was being bestowed upon her and Mary was not immaculately conceived sinless, she was a sinner like all the rest of us and in need of a Savior, and therefore no co-redemptrix. This verse has suffered a lot of abuse but it's meaning is actually quite simple. At the end of the verse, the angel says, "**The Lord is with you.**"

Now in verse 29 Mary was understandably confused by this. And, of course, the only way we could know this is if Mary told someone. So we know this came from Mary. It says, **But she was very perplexed at this statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this was.** The word **perplexed** is from *διαταρασσω* which means "thoroughly confused" or "greatly confused." She was very confused because the NASB says she didn't understand **what kind of salutation this was**. So she **kept pondering** it. The Greek for **kept pondering** is in the imperfect tense. It could be a continuous imperfect, which would mean she went on and on pondering it, but that would require time and there is not a lot of time in the context. Instead it seems to be an inceptive imperfect, which would mean she began pondering. If the Lord was with her, what was he going to do with her?

But in verse 30 her pondering was cut off, since **The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God."** Apparently, mixed in with her confusion and pondering there was some fear of what God was going to do with her. But **the angel** sets out to calm her. **Do not be afraid**, there's no reason to be **afraid**. The reason for his visit is that **you have found favor with God**. The **favor** that she found is from the

word *χαρις*, which is usually translated "grace." Since grace is "unmerited favor," it confirms our interpretation of verse 8 that God was bestowing grace upon Mary, not that Mary was "full of grace" or had done something to deserve being blessed with being the mother of the Messiah.

In verses 31-33 the angel Gabriel tells Mary five specific things that will take place. In verse 31, "**And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus.**" <sup>32</sup>"**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;**" <sup>33</sup>**and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end.**" The first point is that she **would conceive in her womb and bear a son**. She was a virgin, having never been with a man, but she would **conceive** in her **womb**. This is a prediction of the virgin conception. It would make clear the enigmatic prophecy of Isa 7:14, "Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son." Since Mary was only in the betrothal stage at this time, it would be clear that this would happen to her during the betrothal and not after the wedding ceremony. Later, the facts in the case prove this to be the case since when Joseph discovered she was with child he considered divorcing her. Divorce would have been required during the betrothal because it was a legal relationship. Joseph could only conclude that she had been unfaithful during the betrothal period. But since he was a righteous man he decided to put her away secretly because he really loved her and did not want to see her publicly disgraced. And not only would **she conceive** but she would **bear a son**, she would give birth to **a son**. Isa 9:6, "A child will be born, a son will be given." This would be the **son** given. The second point is that **you shall name Him Jesus**. The Greek name *Ἰησοῦς* is from the Hebrew Yeshua, which means "the Lord saves." Jesus would be the Lord who saves. Other OT names that come from the same Hebrew root are Joshua, Isaiah and Hosea. The third point is in verse 32, **He will be great**. John was also said to be great in 1:15. But there it says "he will be great in the sight of the Lord," whereas of Jesus there is no qualifier, he will simply **be great**. Thus, both John and Jesus will be great, but Jesus will be greater than John. Bock said, "Jesus surpasses John the Baptist. The Baptist is "great before the Lord" (1:15), while Jesus is simply "great." The fourth point is that He **will be called the Son of the Most High**. The **Most High** was a common name for God in the OT (*El Elyon*), so this was another way of saying He **will be called the Son of God**. In Jewish thought, a son shared the essential nature of his father. Martin said, "In Semitic thought a son was a 'carbon copy' of his father, and the phrase 'son of' was often used to refer to one who possessed his 'father's' qualities."<sup>3</sup> Thus, son of does not refer to an inferior but to an equal. Therefore, since Jesus will be called the Son of God it means He would possess all the Father's qualities. This means He would be God incarnate. Fruchtenbaum said, "At the moment of the conception, the second Person of the Trinity will add to His divine nature a human nature, thus becoming the biological descendant of Adam, Abraham and David."<sup>4</sup> This relationship between the divine and human is known as the hypostatic union. This doctrine states that Jesus was undiminished deity united with true humanity in one person without confusion or mixture forever. And while the element of Jesus' divinity is clearly present in the passage, the emphasis is on Jesus' humanity that was derived through Mary. The fifth point is that he will fulfill the Davidic covenant. At the end of verse 32 and 33, **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.**" The Davidic Covenant is founded in 1 Chron 17:10b-14. In this passage David had built himself a house of cedar and reflecting upon this he came to the conviction that he should build a house for the Lord, since the ark of the Lord still rested in the Tabernacle, and that is where God dwelled. So he told Nathan the prophet his desire and Nathan told him to "Go, do all that is in your mind..." However, that night the Lord told Nathan that He did not need a house and that he would make David a house. The Lord was using a play on the word house as a reference to a dynasty. Nathan was then told to tell David this, "Moreover, I tell you that the Lord will build a house for you. When your days are fulfilled that you must go to be with your fathers, that I will set up one of your descendants after you, who will be of your sons; and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build for Me a house, and I will establish his throne forever. I will be his father and he shall be My son; and I will not take My lovingkindness away from him, as I took it from him who was before you. But I will settle him in My house and in My kingdom forever, and his throne shall be established forevermore." These are the terms of the Davidic Covenant and they contain four elements, all of which are repeated by the angel Gabriel to Mary. First, the Lord would give the descendant of David an eternal throne. The throne of David is eternal. This does not mean that at all times in history someone must occupy the throne of David, but that the throne will continue forever. This throne is an earthly throne that is ruled from in Jerusalem. Second, the Lord would give David an eternal dynasty. This meant that the dynastic line of David would continue forever. There would always be a descendant from David's dynasty. Third, the Lord would give the descendant of David an eternal kingdom. This means that the kingdom that comes will continue forever once it is established. This kingdom is an earthly kingdom. Fourth, the Lord would give David an eternal descendant. The way that these things can all be fulfilled in an eternal way is because they all culminate in an eternal person; Jesus Christ, the God-man. And all four of these aspects are stated by the angel Gabriel to be fulfilled by the son whom she bears, **The Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end.** Fruchtenbaum said, "These four eternal aspects of the Davidic Covenant are restated here and promised to be fulfilled through Yeshua, the Messiah. The eternity of the house, throne and kingdom is guaranteed because the seed of David culminates in a person who is Himself eternal..."<sup>5</sup> So the five points the angel revealed to Mary are the virgin birth, the name of Jesus, that He will be great, that He will be God and that He will fulfill the Davidic Covenant.

In response to this, in verse 34 Mary asks a question. **Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?"** It's important to point out that this is not the same type of question Zacharias asked in 1:18. Zacharias doubted the truth of the words. He wanted a sign to verify the truth of the words. Mary did not doubt the truth of the words. She only wanted to know how it would happen. The Greek literally does not say **How can this be, since I am a virgin?"** but **"How will this be, since I am a virgin?"** She never doubted that it would be. She wondered how it would take place, given the fact that she was **a virgin.**

In verse 35 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."** Now in

the conception of the Messiah both the Father and the Spirit would be involved. First, as to the Spirit, He would be the source of the virgin conception. She was told, **the Holy Spirit will come upon you**. The verb **come upon** conveys the idea of a supernatural work. This supernatural work would be that of the **Holy Spirit**. Second, as to the Father, His **power** would be involved in some enigmatic way. She was told **and the power of the Most High will overshadow you**. The concept of overshadow is a difficult statement, but it is very much what it sounds like. The word is used four other times in the NT, every time in association with a cloud that casts a shadow by blocking light. Three of these uses are at the Transfiguration and one is in Acts when Peter's shadow was being cast on the streets of Jerusalem to heal all who fell under it. The verb **overshadow means** "to cause a darkened effect by interposing something between a source of light and an object." The word has at its core the idea of something interposing or interfering between a source and an object. It seems to me that the best explanation is that God the Father's power interfered in the natural transmission of the sin nature from Mary to the child. In some way the child must be born without a sin nature but at the same time remain connected to the human race. The power of the Most High would interfere in the conception so that both requirements were met. Mary would contribute his human nature but the power of God would interfere in her transmitting the sinful nature to the child. On a few occasions I have taught, and it is common to hear that the virgin birth was necessary to keep the Messiah from inheriting the sin nature. However, this teaching is false. The assumption behind this teaching is that the sin nature is transmitted through the male seed. However, the Bible teaches that the sin nature is transmitted from both the male and the female. For example, Ps 51:5 emphasizes the female side of transmission when David said, "In sin my mother conceived me." Just because an idea is popular or taught does not make it true. In reality, it's both the father and the mother that transmit the sin nature to the child. This is why, as a child develops, he has sin patterns that reflect both the father and the mother and not only the father. It's why the wife can look at the husband when the child sins and say, "Your son is doing it again!" and later the husband can look at the wife and say, "Now that's your son!" We all recognize the truth of this doctrine in the real world, but some have taught the strange doctrine that the sin nature is transmitted through the father alone. There simply is no passage that teaches that. Instead it is a joint transmission that takes place. However, in order to protect the Messiah from inheriting a sin nature, God intervened in Mary by His overshadowing work.

At the same time the child would be Mary's genuine son; He would derive his true humanity from her. Some have propagated another false teaching here. They have said that Mary did not contribute an egg from her ovaries, but it was implanted by the Holy Spirit. In essence this teaching is saying that Mary was a surrogate mother. However, if this was the case then Jesus had no biological connection to the human race and could not be the last Adam to pay for the sins of the human race or fulfill the covenant made to Abraham's seed, Isaac's seed, Jacob's seed or David's seed. But that Jesus is the seed of Abraham, Paul said to the Galatians in 3:16, "He does not say, "And to seeds," as referring to many, but rather to one, "And to your seed," that is, Christ." Jesus Christ is the genuine seed of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David, and He received His true humanity from Mary, but without a sin nature because the power of the Most High interfered in the transmission of her sin nature.



As a result, the end of verse 35 says, **and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God.** That is, because of the work of the **Holy Spirit** and the **power of the Most High.** This child would be **holy**, that is, set apart from the rest of humanity, because he had no sin nature, and at the same time the **Son of God**, which, as mentioned before, indicates He would be a carbon copy of His Father, such that He has all the characteristics of His Father, so that if you saw Jesus you could say you saw the Father.

Now in verse 36 the angel gives Mary a sign even though she did not doubt or ask for a sign. **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.** This verse sets the stage for the next section in verse 39 where Mary travels to the hill country of Judea to see Elizabeth. Something great had happened to them both and Mary was eager to share it together. What was happening was something great. One old, one young, one barren, one fertile, both pregnant supernaturally, both carrying someone great, but one carrying the forerunner of the Messiah and the other the Messiah Himself. Elizabeth was already pregnant and in her sixth month. Soon the Spirit would conceive the child in Mary and the power of the Most High would interfere so her child was holy.

If it was at all thought that this was impossible, we are reminded in verse 37, **For nothing will be impossible with God.** The Greek word that is translated **nothing** is *ουκ...παν ρημα* which means "not every word" or simply, "For nothing God says is impossible." When God says something will happen it will happen. That is the lesson in this section. It is a call to trust the word of God. Whatever He says, whenever He has said it, it is true and we are to trust it. Zacharias was to trust it, he didn't it had consequences. Mary was to trust it, she did.

Notice verse 38, **And Mary said, "Behold, the bonds slave of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word."** Those are the words of faith. She believes that what the angel said will happen will happen. But even more than this she refers to herself as **the bonds slave of the Lord.** The **bonds slave** was one who put themselves in the service of another. It was a willing service. Mary was saying she was willing to serve in this role. Further she declared, **may it be done to me according to your word.** She willingly accepted this role in the plan of God. Her acceptance may not be appreciated by those of us looking back who think it would be such a great thing to be the mother of the Messiah. But in Jewish culture she would be facing three very difficult things. First, under the Law of Moses a betrothed woman who was found pregnant would be subject to execution by stoning. Second, in Jewish society she would be considered an immoral woman. And this is the rabbinic view of Mary, that she was immoral. Third, she would have to face Joseph, the man she loved and was betrothed to. Yet, through all this she trusted that the Lord would take care of all these details and she gave herself over to Him for His purposes.

In summary, in 1:26 it was the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy when the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a very small city in Galilee called Nazareth. The inhabitants of this town considered themselves descendants of David and thought that the Messiah would be born from among them. In 1:27 the angel came to a virgin who was betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, who was of the descendants of David, through whom the

announced son would gain his throne rights through adoption. The virgin's name was Mary and she was probably only 12-14 years old. When Gabriel came in he said to her, "Good day, favored one! The Lord is with you. In 1:29 she was very perplexed by this salutation, and she began to wonder what it meant. What was the Lord going to do with her? In 1:30 the angel allayed her fears saying, "Do not be afraid, Mary; because you have found grace with God." God wanted to do something great with her. In 1:31, she would conceive in her womb and bear a son as a virgin. When the son was born she should name Him Jesus, which means "The Lord saves." In 1:32 this Jesus would be great, not simply great in the eyes of God, but an unqualified greatness. He would also be called the Son of the Most High, which is to say the Son of God. And finally he would fulfill the Davidic covenant. The Lord God would give Him the eternal throne of David, He would reign over the house of Jacob forever and His kingdom would have no end. In response in 1:34 Mary said, "How will this be, how will this be accomplished, since I am a virgin?" She did not doubt that it would be done, she only wanted to know how it would be done. In 1:35 the angel answered that the Holy Spirit would supernaturally do this and that the power of the Father would interfere in between her sin nature and her seed, so that the child born would be holy and called the Son of God. In 1:36 a sign is given even though she did not ask for a sign. That sign is that her relative, Elizabeth, had conceived in her old age, and was now in her sixth month. In 1:37, the reason these two pregnancies were possible is because there is no word from God that is impossible with God. He is able to bring it to pass. In 1:38 we have Mary's faith response. Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word. And the angel departed. Mary accepted her role despite the penalty that would be imposed under the Mosaic Law, despite the social stigma that would inevitably come and despite the difficulty of facing Joseph as pregnant. She trusted that the Lord would solve her problems.

In conclusion, what can we learn. First, God gives us grace apart from any merit within us. This is demonstrated by God's showering of grace upon Mary. He did not choose her to bear the Messiah because of anything in her. She was a sinner like all the rest of us. She was in need of a Savior. That's why God gives grace to us. There's nothing we can do to get it. He has already given it to us in His Son. Second, God is faithful to His covenant promises. He sent Jesus to fulfill the Davidic Covenant. It is important to note that only two of the four aspects have been fulfilled with His First Coming, and that the other two still await fulfillment in the future at the Second Coming. The two that have been fulfilled at His First Coming both took place as a result of His resurrection. When Jesus was raised from the dead He became the eternal descendant of David. As such David's dynasty is eternal. But the aspects of eternal kingdom and ruling from an eternal throne await fulfillment at His Second Coming. That is when He will reign over the whole house of Jacob. Third, salvation must be secured by one who is a genuine human, yet without sin. Jesus was the only person who meets these conditions in His birth. On one hand, He was connected to the human race through Mary's contribution, yet on the other the power of God intervened so that her sin nature was not transmitted to Him. And that is why there is no other name under heaven by which men must be saved. Fourth, salvation must also be secured by one who is genuinely God. Jesus would be the Son of God, a carbon copy of the Father, such that He is very God of very God and truly human at

the same time. Fifth, the response to the word of God is always faith. Mary was told some very difficult things and put in a very strange situation. She would be pregnant outside of wedlock, but it was by divine purpose. We may be put in a situation of service to the Lord that may not look promising as far as our reputation before the world. But we should trust God to solve our problems.

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<sup>1</sup> Tom Constable, *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003), Lk 1:21.

<sup>2</sup> Tom Constable, *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003), Lk 1:21.

<sup>3</sup> Tom Constable, *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003), Lk 1:32.

<sup>4</sup> Arnold Fruchtenbaum, *Yeshua: The Life of Messiah from a Messianic Jewish Perspective, Volume 1*, 348.

<sup>5</sup> Arnold Fruchtenbaum, *Yeshua: The Life of Messiah from a Messianic Jewish Perspective, Volume 1*, 350.