
Birth of Jesus Foretold

²⁶ In 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. Luke 1:26-38 (ESV)

I greet you with grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Risen Lord and the Holy Spirit who lives within us as believers, empowering us.

As we look at our lesson from Luke, the focus of the angel is all about the good news of a Savior, this is Jesus, Son of the Most High, a reference to Jesus as God. He came to save. May we hear and receive.

Son of the Most High

In our lesson, it says of Jesus, from the angel, ³² **He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High.** John the Baptist too was called great. When the birth of John the Baptist was foretold, the angel said, ¹⁵ **for he will be great before the Lord. And he must not drink wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb.** Luke 1:15 (ESV) Being filled with the Holy Spirit is to say, John was already a Christian within the womb of his mother. While both Jesus and John are identified as great, Zacharias, filled with the Holy Spirit, prophesies about John the Baptist, saying, ⁷⁶ **And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,** Luke 1:76 (ESV) John a prophet, Jesus the Son of the Most High. A son bears the father’s qualities, calling a person a ‘son’ was a way of signifying equality. The Son, Jesus, is God, our Savior from sin. To deny this is to deny the faith, to embrace the Son of God is to receive His life. John in His gospel declares, ³⁰ **Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may**

have life in his name. John 20:30-31 (ESV) Receiving by faith the death of Jesus for you is being given eternal life. All the religions of the world deny that Jesus is God and in faith you receive eternal life. Not the Bible, in Colossians, it says of Jesus, **For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily,** Col 2:9 (ESV). Jesus himself said, ³⁰ **I and the Father are one.**” ³¹ **The Jews picked up stones again to stone him...** ³³ **..for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God.**” John 10:30-33 (ESV) The Jews understood his claim. Jesus receives and blesses Thomas, after he said to Jesus, “²⁸ **...My Lord and my God!**” John 20:28-29 (ESV) Jesus equal to and God, but in his humanity, less than God, as Jesus said, ²⁸ **...the Father is greater than I.** John 14:28 (ESV) This is the God Man, true God, true Man. John in his gospel proclaims Jesus as God and Man, using a name of God, **‘the Word’** of Jesus saying, ¹⁴ **And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.** John 1:14 (ESV) This is truth. I pray you have received Jesus, He is Lord and Savior and only He can save us from our sins, granting forgiveness and eternal life.

Mary - O favored one, the Lord is with you!

Not only does our lesson reveal who Jesus is, it also has much to say about Mary. Unfortunately throughout church history, and some still today, want to make Mary into more than she is, or less than she is. We can discover the truth by simply looking at our lesson today, and the verses that follow. Mary is called ‘O favored one’ with latterly means ‘full of grace’ But this does not mean that Mary dispenses divine grace or grants you merit. No, she is a recipient of grace just like all believers. She is not sinless, nor was she immaculately conceived. Only look to verse 46 of this same chapter, to what is called Mary’s Song of Praise: The Magnificat, where her first statement is ⁴⁶ **...“My soul magnifies the Lord,** ⁴⁷ **and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,** Luke 1:46-47 (ESV) Mary calls Jesus, **‘the Lord’** a name of God, and then **‘God my Savior’** Clearly Mary knows Jesus is her Savior, saving her, since she is a sinner like all of us, and needs a savior. She is given grace like all believers as she declares. In Ephesians 1, the grace to Mary, is described of all believers, saying, ³ **Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing ...** ⁴ **...chose us in him...that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love** ⁵ **he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will,** ⁶ **to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.** ⁷ **In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace,** ⁸ **which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight** Eph 1:3-8 (ESV) Mary received grace from God, the same grace in all believers. In fact Mary and Joseph went on to raise a family, having 4 sons and at least 2 daughters. First in Matthew it says of Joseph, ²⁴ **When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife,** ²⁵ **but knew her not until she had given birth to a son.** Matt 1:24-25 (ESV) Knowing is a reference to sexual intimacy, that waited until after the birth of Jesus.

Next, in Matthew 13, their children are named, saying, ⁵⁵ **Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas?** ⁵⁶ **And are not all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?"** ⁵⁷ **And they took offense at him. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and in his own household."** ⁵⁸ **And he did not do many mighty works there, because of their unbelief.** Matt 13:55-58 (ESV) As you can imagine, there was unbelief in his siblings, in John 7 it says, ⁵ **For not even his brothers believed in him.** John 7:5 (ESV) That changed after the resurrection, James was a leader in the early church and the author of the book of James, his brother Jude the author of the book of Jude. Both Mary and Joseph were step parents of Jesus, since the everlasting God, entered the womb of Mary, not receiving from Mary or Joseph inherited sin. Jesus is without sin, qualified to be our Savior, and able to be our Savior, since He is God. He died and rose for you. We see Jesus as Lord and Savior in Mary's example of faith.

MARY - greatly troubled - How will this be? - let it be to me according to your word.

Mary's faith rests in God and the certainty of His word. This does not mean she does not have questions. But the questions are requests for more information, and that information is granted in small steps, just like in our lives too. Mary's reaction to the angel, ²⁹ **But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be.** She wants to understand, not doubt or deny. So the angel gently comforts her saying, ³⁰ **... "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God."** She wants more information, saying, ³⁵ **How will this be, since I am a virgin?"** She is given the answer of the miraculous, as God enters our world. Mary had her life planned, betrothed to Joseph, which meant there was a wedding contract, they had exchanged wedding vows before family and friends, Joseph was establishing himself in a trade, making ready a home for them, physical contact waited until after the marriage feast, some time in the future, now she is going to be pregnant without a husband, what would that bring, how about her future. What's her answer? It is in the Lord's hand, look at our lesson that says, 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. She is living according to the word, God's will, and that is one step at a time as life unfolds. She has only a few details, but it is enough. She rests in God. May you too rest in faith and live according to the word. May God grant this to us all.

In His precious name we pray, AMEN. May the peace of God that passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. AMEN.