

Wednesday Evening Bible Study

October 31, 2018

The Gospel of Luke

The Annunciation to Mary

Topics – Luke 1; Mary, Elizabeth, John the Baptist, birth of Jesus, angel, Gabriel

Text – Luke 1:26 - 56

Introduction

In verse 26, we fast forward six months from the angelic announcement to Zachariah concerning Elizabeth's pregnancy and the birth of John the Baptist. It was six months ago that the angel Gabriel broke the silence of 400 years and spoke to an old man named Zacharias, and told him that he was going to have a son. Now the angel is going to reappear after a much shorter period of silence – only six months – and this time appears to a young virgin named Mary, and tells her something even more wonderful. Mary also was going to have a son, but her son would be born unlike any other, this Son would be the Son of God.

Practical Point – You never know when God is going to break in to your life and do something awesome. Stay faithful.

Practical Point – God may not use an angel to speak to you or to reveal His plan for your life, but His plan for your life is just as important, and just as non-negotiable as if He did.

In verse 26, the scene changes from Juda to Nazareth, and then back to Juda again. Mary and Joseph are from a village known as Nazareth, which is in Galilee, the area surrounding the Sea of Galilee. Zacharias and Elizabeth are from the hill country of Juda, which was outside of Jerusalem.



I Gabriel Appears to Mary and Propheesies the Birth of Christ (vs. 26 – 38)

V. 26 – The sixth month here is a reference to Elizabeth's pregnancy. This is the same messenger angel, Gabriel, as appeared to Zacharias. The name, Gabriel, means "hero of God". Gabriel also delivers an important message

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V. 27 – The angel appears to “a virgin” named Mary who was “espoused” to a man named Joseph who we are told was a descendent of David, which means he was also from the tribe of Judah.

The word, “virgin” (παρθένος - *Parthenos*), means exactly what we think it means, a person (man or woman) who has not had any sexual intercourse.

Mary was “espoused” (μνηστεύω – *mnēsteuō*) is similar to an engagement or a betrothal, and was a legally binding agreement between a man and a woman, and between both of their parents. Joseph and Mary were espoused or betrothed, and in order to break this agreement, a bill of divorcement had to be granted. (Matthew 1:19)

V. 28 – The angel makes three statements to Mary, praising her.

1. You are highly favored. This is the same word (χαριτώ - *charitoō*) that is used only in one other place:

*“To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us **accepted in the beloved.**”* (Ephesians 1:6)

2. The Lord is with you.
3. You are blessed among women.

Here was a young girl that had kept herself pure and had walked humbly with God, and now she was about to be conferred with the greatest honor that a Jewish woman could possibly receive – to give birth and raise the Messiah.

V. 29 – Mary was distressed, or “greatly agitated,” by what the angel told her.

V. 30 – The angel reassures her again that she is favored of God.

Vs. 31 – 33 – The angel now specifically informs her that she would:

1. Conceive
2. Give birth to a son
3. Call his name Jesus (means “the Lord is salvation”)
4. He would be great. Note – the same statement was made about John the Baptist, but the subsequent statements set Christ apart.
5. He would be called the Son of the Highest.
6. God would give Him the throne of David.

The throne of David was an unconditional covenant promised by God. Nathan promised David:

“And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.” (2 Samuel 7:12-16)

7. He would reign over Israel forever. The mention of Jacob here ensures that God is not finished with Israel.
8. His kingdom would be eternal.

V. 34 – Mary asks for clarification, since she is a virgin.

V. 35 – Gabriel assures her that the Holy Ghost would be the means of conception, and that Jesus would be the Son of God. According to Ryrie:

“The Incarnation was accomplished by this creative act of the Holy Spirit in the body of Mary. The Virgin Birth was a special miracle performed by the Third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, whereby the Second Person of the Trinity, the eternal Son of God, took to Himself a genuine, though sinless, human nature and was born as a man, without surrendering in any aspect His deity.”¹

“Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.” (Isaiah 7:14)

David said: *“Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.”* (Psalm 51:5) But it would be very different for this child of Mary.

V. 36 – Gabriel then gives Mary further news regarding Elizabeth who we were told, “hid herself”, and apparently had not told her family members from Galilee the news. Note – the word, “cousin” (συγγενής – *syggenēs*), means relative or kinsman; a blood relation, but does not necessarily mean the cousin as we use it today. (Mark 6:4; Luke 2:44) Mary was a descendant of Judah (the genealogy in Luke 3 is most likely Mary’s). Elizabeth was of the tribe of Levi, and from the family of Aaron.

V. 37 – The angel repeats a familiar theme of encouragement for people who may be struggling with their faith:

“Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.” (Genesis 18:14)

“Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee: ... Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for me?” (Jeremiah 32:17, 27)

This theme would also be repeated throughout the New Testament, (Luke 18:27; Matthew 19:26; Mark 10:27)

V. 38 – Mary submitted to the will of God, though she knew that potentially it would cause problems with Joseph and her family. Adultery was punishable by stoning. (Deuteronomy 22:13 – 21; John 8:3 – 5)

II Mary Arrives in Juda (Judaea) and Provides Assistance to Elizabeth (vs. 39 – 45; 56)

V. 39 - Mary left to go see Elizabeth “in haste.” Juda (or Judaea) was the area surrounding Jerusalem. It was the area that remained somewhat faithful to the Lord after the northern kingdom of Israel (or Samaria) was deported into Assyrian captivity back in 722 BC.

Vs. 40 – 41 – John the Baptist leaped in the womb at the sound of Mary’s voice. Notice that Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost, and John was filled with the Holy Ghost (v. 15) Today, the Holy Spirit enters into people when they receive Christ.

“If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.” (John 14:15-17)

“That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,” (Ephesians 1:12-13)

¹ Ryrie, C. C. (1994). *Ryrie study Bible: King James Version* (Expanded ed., pp. 1525–1526). Chicago: Moody Press.

"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" (1 Corinthians 6:19)

Fullness of the Spirit, however, has more to do with yieldedness to the indwelling Holy Spirit:

"And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;" (Ephesians 5:18)

It is not how much of the Holy Spirit you have, it is how much the Holy Spirit has you.

Vs. 42 – 44. Elizabeth's greeting indicates that she knows that Mary is pregnant, and that the Messiah was in her womb. Interestingly, this information was not revealed to Zacharias. Yet, Elizabeth, through the fullness of the Holy Ghost, can discern this. Note – the phrase, "mother of my Lord," means the mother of the Messiah. Nowhere in Scripture is Mary called "the mother of God."

V. 45 – I am not quite sure who the "she" is here. However, both women believed, and both women would be blessed, and God would do all that He said He would do through both of them.

V. 56 – Mary stayed with Elizabeth until she was ready to give birth, and then returned to Nazareth.

III Mary Appreciates and Praises the Lord (vs. 46 – 55)

This entire passage (vs. 46 – 55) is a psalm of praise that has come to be known as the Magnificat or Song of Mary.

This song magnifies God and minimizes Mary (and man in general).

Note – v. 54 – "holpen" (ἀντιλαμβάνω – *antilambanō*) – means to support or partner with, or to give back to.

Religion may be guilty of magnifying Mary, but Mary did not magnify herself. Mary recognized that she needed a Saviour. (v. 47) Lester Roloff said, "Mary gave Jesus His first birth, but Jesus will give Mary her second."

According to Ryrie, "There are 15 discernible quotations from the OT in this poem, showing how much the OT was known and loved in the home in which Jesus was reared."²

It bears many similarities to Hannah's prayer in 1 Samuel 2:1 – 10.

² Ryrie, C. C. (1994). *Ryrie study Bible: King James Version* (Expanded ed., p. 1526). Chicago: Moody Press.