

He Will Be Great

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[0 : 00] 400 years of silence broken. God began to speak again.

Through the angel Gabriel. Gabriel visited and revealed to Zechariah that he and his wife in their old age in barrenness were to conceive a son and the son's name would be John.

And John would be the forerunner of the long-awaited Messiah. The King of kings and the Lord of lords. The deliverer of God's people. 400 years of silence.

But God was at work. Bringing about His eternal plan for the salvation of mankind. This morning we're going to look at Luke 1.

Verses 26-38. It's the historic account of God sending the angel Gabriel to a teenaged peasant girl.

[1 : 14] A virgin living in a good-for-nothing place called Nazareth. It was Nathaniel in John 1 who said, can anything good come from Nazareth? God had given Gabriel the task of telling this teenaged virgin girl, Mary, that she would conceive and give birth to a boy destined for greatness.

If you look at Luke 1. Verse 32. Out of the lips of Gabriel, we read this of this baby.

He will be great. This baby is no other than Emmanuel. God with us.

The King of kings and the Lord of lords. And this morning we're going to look at the miraculous conception of our glorious King. The incarnating of the second person of the Trinity.

It's amazing. The incarnation of the second person of the Trinity is not about God becoming cute and cuddly.

[2 : 35] Though I'm sure He was cute and cuddly. The incarnation, this miraculous conception of God becoming a man, taking on flesh, it's all about fulfillment.

The long-anticipated rival of the Messiah King. The King of kings and the Lord of lords. This baby was destined for greatness because He's the greatest.

So if you're looking at Luke 1, let me read through verses 26-38. In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph of the house of David.

And the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, Greetings, O favored one! The Lord is with you! But she was greatly troubled at the saying and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be.

And the angel said to her, Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son and you shall call His name Jesus.

[3 : 48] 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. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever. And of His kingdom, there will be no end.

And Mary said to the angel, How will this be since I am a virgin? 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. And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son. And this is the sixth month with her who has been called barren.

For nothing will be impossible with God. 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. This baby, miraculously conceived in the virgin's womb, he was destined for greatness.

[4 : 58] This morning, I just want to ask you a quick question. Are you amazed at his greatness? His miraculous conception points to his greatness.

So let's do this. Let's walk through this passage again. But let me give you a little bit more detail. In verses 26 and 27, they set up the historic conversation between the angel Gabriel in this virgin

Mary.

And as I mentioned earlier, Gabriel was the same angel that God had sent to Zechariah. Gabriel was breaking the 400 years of silence.

And he was announcing the coming of the long-awaited king, the Messiah. Now it's important to notice where this scene is taking place. It's taking place in Nazareth.

And Nazareth didn't have the best reputation. It would have been considered a backwater town. No one would have guessed the king of kings and the lords of lords would have been conceived there.

[6:09] Now in a couple weeks, we'll look at how Mary and this baby get from Nazareth to Bethlehem, which is 70 miles due south. But what you need to know here is this is taking place in Nazareth.

Not a prestigious town. Our Savior was conceived in very humble beginnings. Which brings us to this humble peasant girl, Mary.

She was probably between the ages of 12 and 14, scholars say. And in verse 27, we learn a couple things about Mary. She was a virgin.

It's repeated twice in verse 27 and once again in verse 34. There's emphasis here. God wants us to know that this young woman has not known a man sexually.

Verse 34 literally reads this. Mary asking the question, how will this be since I have not known a man? Luke is emphasizing Mary's virginity.

[7:19] And the question is why? Well, there are two important reasons. The first one is this. No man on earth could claim that this baby that was to be conceived in her was his own.

It's that simple. And the second reason is one of fulfillment. This was the fulfillment of a prophetic sign way back in Isaiah 7.14 spoken 700 years earlier.

Isaiah 7.14 reads this. Therefore, the Lord Himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son and His name shall be called Emmanuel.

Emmanuel. What Luke is helping us here, he's helping us make a connection. That this Mary is the virgin that Isaiah spoke of 700 years earlier.

What we need to see happening here is this. God's plan for the fullness of time is being worked out. God is fulfilling His word.

[8:32] God is bringing salvation to mankind. God is trying to find. He's been at work over these 400 years of silence. We also learn that Mary was betrothed to a guy named Joseph.

Now at that time, getting Mary involved two steps, kind of like our two steps nowadays. The first step back then was called betrothal and it was a legally binding commitment between a man and a woman.

The second step was marriage where a man and woman actually came together and consummated their union. Like I said, it's kind of similar to what we experience today.

A man and woman becoming engaged and then getting married. But unlike today, betrothal in the first century, that first step, was legally binding.

And so to break off a betrothal required a legal divorce. That's what's happening when we read Matthew chapter 1 when Joseph learns that Mary was pregnant.

[9:36] How about that for some drama? He assumes another man had gotten Mary pregnant and he's going to divorce her quietly. The situation was such that it required an angel of the Lord, I'm guessing Gabriel, to appear to Joseph and to explain to him that the child in Mary's womb was conceived by the Holy Spirit in fulfillment of Isaiah 7.14.

And the angel said, you've got to take her as your wife. And Joseph did. He believed and he obeyed. So Mary was a young, teenaged virgin, betrothed to Joseph, living in the good-for-nothing town of Nazareth when Gabriel appears to her and in verse 28 we read the greeting.

Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you. Now mind you, there was no warning of this. Maybe a more accurate rendering would be rejoice, O favored one, the Lord is with you.

Gabriel is bringing good news. It's like he's saying, Mary, in God's great purposes, you are the virgin of Isaiah 7.14.

Rejoice, O favored one. It's Mary who will conceive and give birth to Emmanuel, God with us. Think about this.

[11:03] when God inspired Isaiah to speak the words recorded, Isaiah 7.14, God knew who he had in mind.

God knew this Mary 700 years earlier. She's not a random choice. What's happening here is the outworking of God's eternal plan.

And it helps us to understand what Gabriel means when he calls Mary, O favored one. She has been chosen by God to fulfill Isaiah 7.14.

Gabriel also tells Mary, God is with you. What a promise. Very timely. Because what Mary is going to go through, she's going to need that promise.

Well, verse 27, we see Mary's response. She's troubled. Literally, she's confused. She's confused at what Gabriel has just said to her. Maybe she's in the presence of an angel.

[12:09] We're not told what he looks like. Was he kind of levitating off the ground a little bit? To what degree was he glowing? How did she know? Maybe she was overwhelmed by that.

It does seem clear, though, that she was also overwhelmed by the words that seemed to be coming out of nowhere. her. Rejoice, O favored one. God is with you.

What was she doing when she was interrupted? It's probably all of the above. An angel speaking to you would be somewhat troubling.

him. But we see something here about Mary that clues us into why God had chosen her. She, tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be.

she was thoughtful about it. She didn't freak out. She didn't turn around and run. She was thoughtful.

[13:12] What does this mean? Gabriel sees her trying to make sense of what's going on here and so he speaks again. Verse 30, Don't be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.

It's like Gabriel saying, Mary, everything's cool. God has chosen you among all women for a great privilege. What is God going to do? Look at verse 31.

And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son and you shall call his name Jesus.

Does that echo of anything in your mind?

It should echo of the passage I read earlier. should echo of Isaiah 7.14. Therefore, the Lord himself will give you a sign.

Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name Emmanuel. The angel says here, and behold, you, the virgin, will conceive in your womb and bear a son and you shall call his name what are you waiting for?

[14:26] Isaiah 7.14 would say Emmanuel. The angel says Jesus. It's purposeful. What's the intended effect?

If you knew Isaiah 7.14 you would be thinking Jesus is Emmanuel. Emmanuel is Jesus. Jesus. Jesus is God with us. Now Jesus was a common name back in the day. In our rendering, it's a rendering, Jesus is English for a Hebrew word Yeshua, which actually means Joshua and it actually means Savior.

and behold, you Mary, the virgin, will conceive in your womb and bear a son and you shall call his name Savior who is our Emmanuel, God with us.

It's packed. Packed. Mary's being told she's to be the mother of the Messiah, Emmanuel, God with us and his name is Jesus.

[15:36] No other woman on the face of this planet can claim that honor. We don't worship her because of that, but we do bless her because of that. We do honor her because of that.

Gabriel continues in verse 32, He will be great. This woman born to you, He will be great. This Jesus born to you, He is destined for greatness because He is the greatest.

He, Jesus, will be called the Son of the Most High. He will be conceived by God Himself. This gets at the deep end of the pool.

You see, Jesus had two natures. He was simultaneously fully God and fully man.

two distinct natures in one person. He remains so today. Remember, He lived a life, died on the cross, was raised from the dead, and then He ascended to the right hand of God bodily and where He is right now.

[16:48] Fully God, fully man, interceding for His own. Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to Him the throne of His father, David.

This is the fulfillment of a promise God made to King David way back in 2 Samuel 7. God promises to King David He will establish David's throne forever.

There will always be a descendant of David on David's throne. Jesus is that descendant of David. David. The throne represents kingship.

God is saying this child in Mary's womb is the long-awaited descendant of David who will sit upon the throne. And by the way, He's fully God and fully man. Emmanuel.

He is the forever king. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever. God is giving this child conceived in Mary's womb to be king and He's going to reign.

[17 : 55] He's going to exercise authority over the house of Jacob. He is Israel's long-awaited Messiah. The long-awaited King of Israel.

He is their Messiah who will reign forever and by God's grace, He is our Messiah. He is king of both Jews and Gentiles.

He's the king of kings and the Lord of lords. He's Lord of all. Our forever king who will reign forever and of His kingdom there will be no end.

Nations rise and nations fall but not the kingdom of Emmanuel. The kingdom of God has no end as Christians. We've been transferred from the domain of darkness into the kingdom of God's beloved son King Jesus.

A kingdom expanding and everlasting. It's expanding in this city. He is our forever king whose reign is forever and He reigns over an everlasting kingdom.

[19 : 03] kingdom. That's the one who's in the womb. He will be great. This baby conceived was destined for greatness because He is greatness.

He is our forever king who will exercise a forever reign on David's throne over an everlasting kingdom. It's as if Gabriel is saying to this virgin, Mary, the child in your womb is the one who fulfills God's forever plan.

He's the forever king. He will be great. What do you think about them apples, Mary? Verse 34, Mary responds in faith but she has a very pragmatic question.

Her question is a how question. A how question born of faith. Now, Zachariah earlier on asked a how question. When the angel Gabriel told him that his wife was going to have a son, he was like, how's that going to happen?

Show me. Prove it to me. And the angel did. He inflicted mutinous on Zachariah for nine months. It was quite the sign.

[20 : 23] Mary doesn't demand an explanation. She humbly asks for help to understand. Mary isn't the only one who needs help in understanding what happened in her womb.

We need help. It's hard for us to understand how a child can be conceived in a virgin's womb without a man involved. Conception typically doesn't happen that way.

God's ways are higher than our ways. In verse 35, Gabriel helps Mary and us understand how this child will be conceived in the virgin's womb.

and he brings us once again into the deep end of the pool. He says this, the Holy Spirit will come upon you and the Most High will overshadow you.

Therefore, the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. Gabriel doesn't give Mary a biological answer. Gabriel gives Mary a theological answer. The conception of Jesus in the virgin womb of Mary was a miraculous display of the triune God's powerful presence.

[21 : 42] You see him? Do you see this triune God there in verse 35? The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the Most High will overshadow you. There he is, the Son of God.

Three persons of the Trinity. They're all there. The Father, the first person of the Trinity, God Most High overshadows Mary. There's no hint in this text of sexual overtones.

It's the same word that describes, this word overshadow, describes God's presence that overshadowed the Mount of Transfiguration. God's presence manifest.

Out of which God says, this is my beloved Son of whom I'm well pleased. The third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, was the one who actually caused the second person of the Trinity to be conceived in the virgin's womb.

This is big stuff, isn't it? Now what we need to understand is this. The second person of the Trinity has eternally existed before his incarnation.

[22 : 50] Jesus wasn't created. The second person of the Trinity wasn't created at the incarnation. The second person of the Trinity eternally existed before the incarnation and then as a work of the triune God.

He was incarnated. He took on human flesh. Fully God, fully man. Two distinct natures in one person. What's so unique about this point in the history of redemption is that the eternal Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, permanently takes on human flesh.

It's amazing. For that to happen required a coordinated miracle of the triune God. This Jesus, He will be great.

The second person of the Trinity miraculously conceived in the womb of Mary as a man. Fully God. Fully man. Man, this is not only miraculous, it's mysterious.

This is hard to keep together, isn't it? This is beyond us. It's the glory of our King. What we see here in verse 35 is all three members of the Trinity involved in the miraculous conception of Jesus and Mary's womb.

[24 : 11] The miraculous conception is a triune miracle. This is all part of the plan of God's eternal plan for the salvation of mankind. In verses 36 and 37, Gabriel goes on to assure Mary of God's ability to pull this miracle off.

And the way he does it, he says, hey, I've already been doing this kind of stuff. Your relative, Elizabeth, she's conceived six months ago. It's already happening. I'm capable of this kind of thing. Do you remember Gabriel's first words to Mary? Rejoice, O favored one. God is with you. What a promise. Great assurance.

And the final words of Gabriel here in this text to Mary is this, for nothing will be impossible with God. Opening the womb of an old, barren woman is well within God's omnipotence. Incarnating the Savior of the world, Jesus, fully God and fully man in a virgin's womb is also well within God's power. What's impossible, humanly speaking, a virgin conceiving a child without a man is more than possible for God.

[25 : 34] His ways are far beyond our ways. God's love is the Lord. This scene ends in verse 38. Mary takes it all in and says, I am the Lord. I am the servant of the Lord.

Let it be to me according to your word. In other words, Amen! Amen. It's a humble and believing response.

She sees herself rightly in relationship to God. She will serve in the capacity God has called her to. That humility is further demonstrated in her trusting in the words of the angel Gabriel who was sent from God.

She is trusting that these words are true and must be obeyed. Not only is she to be the mother of Jesus, she's becoming a disciple of Jesus.

this woman who will be at the birth of Jesus will also be present at His death. She will become one of His followers.

[26 : 40] So what is this passage all about? It's all about the greatness of the One who was miraculously conceived in Mary's virgin womb.

It's all about Him. It's all about Christ. Christ. Gabriel said it in verse whatever. He will be great. He was destined for greatness because He is the greatest.

So here's this. Four things to walk away with this morning. Four things to walk away and be amazed by. To savor this Christmas season.

First is this. The conception of Jesus in the virgin womb of Mary was a great fulfillment. fulfillment. It's the fulfillment of Isaiah 7.14.

Behold, the virgin shall conceive a child and bear a son. They should call His name Emmanuel. The great fulfillment is part of God's great plan of salvation for sinners like me and you.

[27 : 40] Emmanuel is Jesus. Our Savior. Our God became flesh in order to save sinners. It's an amazing fulfillment. fulfillment. Are you amazed that your God would take on flesh in order to rescue you?

Are you amazed? The second thing, the conception of Jesus in the virgin's womb was a great miracle. It's not humanly possible.

but what is impossible for man is possible for the triune God. The miraculous conception of Emmanuel was a coordinated miracle of the triune God.

It was all according to His plan. It's an amazing miracle and it's essential to our faith. Are you amazed by that miracle? Do you realize what happened?

It's amazing. Nothing is impossible for God. Third, the conception of Jesus in Mary's womb is a great mystery.

[28 : 54] How can God become flesh? How does the eternally existing second person of the Trinity take on human flesh without ceasing to be either fully God or fully man?

It's an amazing mystery and it's our God. It's our King. It's our Savior. That's who He is. He is. It's glorious. There's no one like Him. He is the only theanthropic one.

Fully God, fully man. One person. And as the only one who is fully God and fully man, He's the only mediator between God and man.

No one can be saved apart from Him. God became one of us in order to save us. Are you amazed?

Fourth, the baby conceived in the virgin's womb is the great forever King.

And He calls you to wholehearted humble obedience. Your response to Jesus is to be the same of His mother's. Behold, I am the servant of the Lord.

[30 : 05] Let it be to me according to your word. Have you bowed your knee in wholehearted, humble obedience to King Jesus? He is the great King of kings and Lord of lords.

And those who bowed their knee to Him and Him alone, you know what they find? Forgiveness of all their sins. Freedom from captivity. Joy unceasing.

Blessing upon blessing upon blessing. The opening words of Mary's magnificat will be yours if you bow your knee. My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.

Our conclusion this morning? The 400 years of silence had been broken. The baby born of the Virgin Mary, he will be great. He is great.

He is alive and he is reigning and he is expanding his everlasting kingdom. He is our great Savior, our great King.

[31 : 11] He is our great Emmanuel. And my prayer for you is that his greatness would be the joy of your Christmas. Let's pray.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Great triune God, we stand amazed at what you did 2,000 years ago.

This is beyond us. We recognize your ways are not our ways, but what we can see, we say glory to God in the highest. There's no one like you.

King Jesus, we gladly bow our knee, for we delight in you. We delight in you. You are our Emmanuel. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.