

Are You Ready For The Coming Of The Lord?

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- [0 : 0 0] Luke chapter 1 verses 26 through 38. This is God's inspired, inerrant, infallible, clear, sufficient, authoritative word for you, his people.
- Luke 1, starting at 26. Now in the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David.
- The virgin's name was Mary. And having come in, the angel said to her, Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women.
- But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying and considered what manner of greeting this was. Then the angel said to her, Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.
- Verse 31. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a son and he shall be called Jesus. He will be great and will be called the son of the highest and the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David.
- [1 : 2 2] And he will reign over the house of Jacob forever and ever. And of his kingdom, there will be no end. Then Mary said to the angel, How can this be since I do not know a man?
- And the angel answered and said to her, The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the highest will overshadow you. Therefore, also the Holy One who is to be born will be called the son of God.
- Now, indeed, Elizabeth, your relative has gone and also conceived a son in her old age. And this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren.
- For with God, nothing will be impossible. Then Mary said, Behold, the maidservant of the Lord. Let it be to me according to your word.
- And the angel departed from her. This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Thanks be to God. You may be seated. The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of the Lord stands forever.
- [2 : 3 2] Let's pray. Lord, we praise you that you have not left us in darkness, but you have shown the light of your glory into this world in the person of Jesus Christ.
- We praise you for the light that has overcome the darkness and for how the gospel of Jesus Christ, our Savior and our Lord, how this gospel continues to conquer and push back the darkness.
- Lord, no shadow can stand before your unfolding glory. We praise you, Father, that you speak still today, that your Holy Spirit makes your word active and sharp and alive.
- We pray that your word will shine into the darkest places, Lord, of our minds that need to be enlightened and reformed, and that you'll draw us, Father, by your love, by your conquering power, to more and more conform to this image and likeness of your Son, that he will be glorified, and the purpose of his mission will be fulfilled in us as people.
- We ask this for your glory, for our good, and for his precious namesake. Amen. Well, failure to prepare is fatal.

[3 : 51] History teaches us this. If the Romans were to set their eyes on your piece of land and you were not ready for them to come with their army and their artillery, it was game over for you.

You know how the Roman Empire would expand and conquer. They would begin by surrounding your countryside. They would then destroy your farms, cut off your supply of food, so that you become starved and weakened on the inside of the walls.

After a while, if you were to try to negotiate with the Romans, they would give you a settlement that is so unfavorable, they would drive you into poverty by heavy taxes. If you were to fight when you're already weakened without food, you would easily get slaughtered, and any survivors would then become their slaves.

Failure to prepare for a conquering kingdom is fatal. This is the time of Advent. Advent. And I want to encourage you that Advent is a time of Christ's kingdom coming and for us to prepare for it.

Where does that word Advent come from? Well, after Julius Caesar in about the year 100 before Christ, he won a battle in Asia Minor, so just north of Philippi, where we've been going in our series.

[5 : 11] He later returned home, and famously, or at least supposedly, according to historians, he declared those famous three words in Latin, *veni, vidi, vici*.

It's a phrase that means I came, I saw, and I conquered. What does that have to do with the word advent? Well, that verb, *venire*, or *ven*, it means to move towards, to draw nigh, to approach, to arrive at, to be present, or to advance upon.

It means I came to that land that I saw, and I conquered it. It's the coming of a conquering king. Since God finished the revelation of the Old Testament, there have been 400 years without a prophet being risen up, and the spirit poured out so they could give new revelation.

400 years without an angel showing up from heaven, and speaking on behalf of God to God's people. And there's been a remnant waiting for those 400 years for the coming of the king, the coming of Messiah, the anointed one.

They're waiting for him to come. Those 400 years were 400 years of advent, making themselves ready, preparing themselves because the king is coming to their land.

[6 : 36] An example of this remnant that was waiting for the coming of the anointed one, you can actually turn a page forward in your Bible. It's Luke chapter 2, verse 25.

We read of Simeon. He's described as being just and devout. He's a man whose faith is serious. He's wanting to be in the presence of God, to stand forgiven and righteous before the Lord, devout to search the scriptures.

And it says that Simeon, Luke 2, 25, was waiting. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And he's one of many who will prophesy, and who will burst forward into song.

So, beloved congregation, Advent is not bells and smells. Advent is a time to get your soul ready for the second coming of Christ.

My question for us today is, are you ready for the coming of the Lord? Are you ready for the coming of the Lord? I want to see in Luke 1, four ways to be ready for the king that's coming and advancing his kingdom.

[7 : 54] The first one is this, in verse 26, to be ready for the coming of the Lord. Realize that heaven invades earth when you least expect it.

Heaven invades earth when you least expect it. In verse 26, we read, now in the sixth month, what is this point of reference? You can go back two verses.

So look at Luke 1, verse 24. We're told Elizabeth had conceived, even though she was in her old age. It was God miraculously allowing someone much beyond the age of giving birth to a child to become pregnant.

And then we're told in verse 24 that she hid herself five months. So this clarifies, it's now the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy. The angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth.

See, heaven, it will invade earth when you least expect it. Picture this trip. Gabriel, an angel of the Lord, God most high.

[9 : 02] His trip goes from glory to utter simplicity. It goes from highest heaven to Nazareth. Look in Luke chapter 1, verse 19.

Gabriel had made another appearance and he described himself this way in Luke 1, 19. I am Gabriel who stands in the presence of God. This is where Gabriel stands.

This is where he goes to work. It's in the presence of God. What does the Bible say about the presence of God? In Hebrews 12, 22, we're told the presence of God.

It's a heavenly Mount Zion, the city of the living God surrounded by an innumerable company of angels. So there stands Gabriel before God the creator with an innumerable company of angels in heaven.

Revelation 4 and 5 described heaven as a place of worship where the voice of angels is crying out the glory and the praise of God along with all the souls that God has redeemed throughout the Old and the New Testament by the great host that surround the throne of God.

[10 : 16] And we're told in Luke 15, 10 that heaven, the presence of God is a place of joy that the angels of God, they burst forth in joy, rejoicing over one sinner, who repents.

That's where Gabriel gets to work day and night before the throne of God. And from the holy throne of God in heaven, he sends Gabriel to Nazareth.

Simple, middle of nowhere, quiet town of Nazareth. When God gave to the Israelites the land of Israel, the promised land, you remember how the 12 tribes, the two half tribes are made into 13, but they each were given a portion of land in Israel.

Well, this place of Nazareth was given to the half tribe called Nap, I'm sorry, to the tribe of Naphtali. It was the son of Rachel's maidservant. maidservant.

So not the beloved Rachel, but the place where Rachel's bond slave, her son, was given. This land of Nazareth had turned to worship the idols.

[11 : 24] They had been conquered by the Assyrians much before the two southern tribes fell to idolatry. The people that lived in the land of Nazareth had been scattered, carried away. There had been a remnant that had been left back, but then when the Lord brought them back out of captivity and they began to live in the land, the Assyrians had purposely intermingled them and mixed them.

So these northern tribes were looked down upon by the two southern tribes as being impure, unkosher. Even the other Galileans who lived in this northern region would mock Nazareth as an out-of-the-way place.

It's not something you would expect anything great to come from. You remember the words of Nathaniel in John 1.46. He said, can anything good come out of Nazareth? Well, we read that in verse 26.

This is exactly the town that the Lord sent Gabriel to. And in verse 27, we read, it was to speak to a virgin who was betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph of the house of David.

A person would be betrothed. Their parents would talk to other parents and they would agree that this daughter around the age 13 would be given in marriage to this boy or this young man.

[12 : 43] You would be betrothed for one year. It was legally binding. And during this one year, it was a period of testing to make sure that the two could remain pure for one another.

It was a period of chastity. If this betrothed girl were to become impure, then the young man who was betrothed to her during this one year period, he had two options.

He could apply justice to her according to Deuteronomy chapter 22 verse 21, and he would stone her as an adulteress for being unfaithful.

Or he could choose to show her mercy by divorcing her quietly. Mary's relatives were told she traveled down to visit Elizabeth, so that was her side of the family that lived in the hill country around Jerusalem.

And Elizabeth's husband had been chosen to be the high priest that year. We also know that Joseph had to travel down to Bethlehem to trace his family heritage down south. Bethlehem is very close to Jerusalem as well.

[13 : 48] But how did this young couple end up not close to Jerusalem, the pure tribes, but way up in Nazareth, out of the middle of nowhere? We don't know the details of their story. It's likely that either their parents or grandparents for work and survival had to migrate within the country.

We do know that Joseph and Mary were working class and very poor because when they came to bring a sacrifice, they didn't bring a lamb. They had to bring a poor man's offering, which was pigeons.

And we knew that Joseph was a carpenter's apprentice, getting started, learning a trade. And this is where the angel Gabriel shows up. We don't get a lot of details about the life of Mary and Joseph or Jesus in those formative years, but we do read in Luke 4, chapter, I'm sorry, chapter 4, verse 16, that it was in Nazareth where Jesus had been brought up, that Jesus went to the synagogue.

Synagogue would be not a temple, but a place where God's people could go to read the scriptures for themselves. And Jesus went there on a Sabbath, as was his custom, and he stood up and read.

So growing up with these poor, simple parents, going to the synagogue, hearing the word of God read, this is the simple upbringing of the Son of God. Small town, small church, you work, you study, you do it again the next week.

[15 : 14] heaven will break into earth when we least expect it. It might feel the same for you today.

Your life is simple, it's routine, feels very mundane, and here we have a small group of people awaiting the coming of the Messiah, the King, the promised one, and they're living, devout, reading his word, studying his word, coming to hear from the Lord week after week.

Will we be ready for the next coming of the King? 1 Thessalonians 4, 16 and 17 says that the Lord himself, again, will descend from heaven, not Gabriel this time, it will be Jesus Christ himself.

He will come to earth again, and it will be with a great shout, with the voice of an archangel, with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are still alive, we will be caught up together with them in the clouds, and we will meet the Lord in the air.

Heaven will burst onto this earth when we least expect it once again. So let's be ready for the next coming of the Lord. The second way we do this is to realize that our salvation depends entirely on God's grace for you in Christ.

[16 : 35] Realize that your salvation depends entirely on God's grace for you in Christ. I want to point this out with Mary and her response to the angel.

Look at verse 27 at how Mary is described. We're told by this same author under the inspiration of the Holy Scripture that Simeon was devout and just.

And that's how Elizabeth and Zacharias were described. But to Mary there's no description given. Look at verse 27. It simply says the virgin's name was Mary. Not pointing out any other blessings or attributes or meritorious traits of this young one.

Verse 28 says, Having come in, the angel said to Mary, Rejoice, highly favored one. The Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women.

Do you see the simplicity of it? such a quiet town you can almost hear the door crack open, screech, and then here comes Mary entering the house and before her is an angel who moments ago was in the presence of God most high.

[17 : 46] But this greeting is very calm. There's no ceremony to it. It just simply says, Rejoice, favored one. The Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women.

And Mary's response in verse 29 says that when she saw him, the angel Gabriel, Mary was troubled at his saying and considered what manner of greeting this was.

We have to understand their custom to realize what that sentence means. A great example that was helpful to me is, do you remember in the Old Testament when one of the patriarchs was going to meet another or when we had Jacob going back to meet Esau and there's, send the caravans out in front with all the gifts and let me come and make myself low before him and show like, I'm submissive to you.

You're the Lord in this relationship. I'm humbling myself as I greet you. So how a greeting happened in the custom of the ancient Hebrew people, it was establishing right off the bat, how are we going to interact with one another?

And it would be presumptuous for a 13-year-old girl who has nothing to be described by except that she was young and virgin to expect to be on the same level as the angel Gabriel from the presence of the Lord who strikes fear in anyone.

[19 : 04] So she's surprised at what manner of greeting is this? The angel from God's presence is greeting me and saying, you are highly favored. The Lord is blessing you above all other women.

This doesn't make any sense. She's the one who should be making herself low and giving these exalted greetings and praise to this glorious figure from heaven. In verse 30, the angel said to her, Do not be afraid, Mary.

You have found favor with God. You have found favor with God. That phrase, to find favor with God, has been used by the Roman Catholic Church to create an entire idolatrous body of teaching.

The Roman Catholic Council of Trent wrongly interpreted that phrase, to have found favor with God, as to be full of grace. And it's then taught that Mary is all holy.

If you're full of God's grace, there's no room for sin, therefore you are fully all holy. Pope Pius IX in 1854 taught that Mary was redeemed from the moment of her conception.

[20 : 18] It just keeps adding on these requirements then for Mary to give birth to the Holy Son of God. How could her sin have not polluted him? And therefore, she must have never had sin in her whole life.

She would have also been sinless. All of this is based on that exact little phrase, you have found favor with God.

The verb is to have found. So that's a good translation. You have found favor with God. The word favor in the Greek is karim. Karim. And that literally means grace.

152 times or so that word is used in the New Testament. 130 of those times it's translated as grace. It's a mere handful of times where it's translated as anything other than grace.

Here's an example in Acts 15, 11. It's through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, through the karim of the Lord Jesus Christ that we shall be saved. You hear the word of God of the gospel and you believe.

[21 : 22] God who knows the heart, he acknowledges you by giving you the Holy Spirit and purifying your heart by faith. So that's the same translation of the word karim, grace. This phrase, to have found favor in the eyes of God, this also brings to mind a couple passages in the Old Testament where that same description is given.

In Genesis 6, 8, we're told that Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. Now the Hebrew word is chin, Noah found chin, and so how is that word translated?

Well in Exodus 13, 17, God said of Moses, you, Moses, have found chin, or you have found grace in my sight and I know your name. The sins of Noah, the sins of Moses are very clear in the Old Testament.

The point is that God looked upon all those who deserve punishment and wrath for their sin and instead of giving them what they deserve, they are ill-deserving. Instead, he gives them favor and blessing and it's the same word to describe to Mary finding grace in the sight of God.

We read in verse 38, Luke 1, 38, then Mary said, behold, the maid servant or the bond slave of the Lord. Let it be to me according to your word.

[22 : 42] And then the angel departed. See, even Mary's faith is nothing extraordinary. Mary's faith is simply the faith of a child. She is trusting this word that the Lord has given her, surrendering to the Lord himself, trusting in his word.

And that's how she is ready for the coming of the Lord. She receives this by faith, trusting in the grace of God to her. Alone. For you to be ready for the coming of the Lord, that's the response that God calls of you as well.

When Christ returns, don't remain unrepentant, proud. See, the demons know that God is coming again. In Mark 1, 24, they say to Christ that his first coming, what have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth?

Have you come to destroy us? We know who you are, the Holy One of God. So the faith of the demon says, yes, he is coming and he will destroy all those who do not bow their knee to him.

They fear the first coming of the Lord. And Paul words very sternly in 1 Corinthians 16, 22, if anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed.

[23 : 58] And then he says, oh come, Lord Jesus. Maranatha. See, that should be our prayer in the face of injustice. Someone who denies Jesus Christ, does not believe God at his word, stands proud and unrepentant before the Lord.

Our prayer should simply be to turn to God and say, come quickly, Lord Jesus. My temptation is to take matters into my own hands, but I need to remember I'm a sinner just like that.

I would be just as blind if God hadn't shown me his grace and shown me his favor when I'm ill-deserving. Because my salvation depends entirely on God's grace for me in Christ.

And then it changes. I can pray, come quickly, Lord Jesus. Not because I live in fear like these demons, but because I trust I am fully pardoned, fully forgiven, fully united to God by the person and work of Jesus.

I stand in his grace alone. Well, the third way to be ready for the next coming of the Lord is to trust that he is who he says he is.

[25 : 08] To be ready for the coming of the Lord, trust that the Lord is who he says he is. Look at verse 31. We read, Behold, the angel tells Mary, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a son and shall call his name Jesus.

and he will be great and will be called the son of the highest. 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 there will be no end.

Mary, do you trust that Jesus is who he says he is? Both Mary and Joseph were told by the angel to give this baby the name Jesus.

And we know that Mary goes to visit Elizabeth but then the next thing that happens is that Mary and Joseph travel together and they would have so much to process together that God has revealed to them and making sense of what God has told them by the mouth of his own angels his servants and messengers that came from the presence of God most high.

so they can refer now to this little baby in the tummy as Jesus like parents love to do and as they're talking together husband and wife as they travel to Bethlehem Jesus his name will be Yeshua Yeshua means to save in Exodus 14 13 Moses is given this word stand firm and see the salvation of the Lord which he will work for you today to read that with the Hebrew word inserted it's this stand firm and see the Yeshua of the Lord which he will work for you today Yeshua means salvation and you can picture Mary's thoughts well Isaiah 43 11 God says behold I am the Lord and there is no other savior besides me God says

[27 : 21] I am the Lord there is no other savior besides me and Isaiah 45 22 says turn to me and be saved all the ends of the earth for I am God and there is no other see the teaching of the Old Testament is very clear there is one being capable of saving sinners and who is it's God himself there is no one else who can save there is no other savior besides God I am the Lord himself and Joseph recalls Matthew 121 in fact turn there so you can see it with your own eyes Matthew 121 the angel of the

Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream saying Joseph son of David do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit and she will bring forth a son and you will call his name Yeshua salvation for he will save his people from their sins how much of this could Mary and Joseph have put together with what God revealed to them we can use a logical syllogism to arrive at a conclusion that sound here's the first premise according to Isaiah 43 there is no savior besides God here's the second premise we got to reconcile according to Matthew 21 Jesus will save his people from their sins do you get this there's no savior besides

God Jesus will save his people from their sin the only conclusion you can draw is that Jesus in your womb is God look at Mary's response go back to Luke chapter one we're told that Mary was reflective you know she pondered these things in her heart we're told two times there's so much to ponder here and as she ponders and meditates at some point the Holy Spirit inspires her and she bursts into song look at Luke chapter one verse 46 Mary says my inner being my soul magnifies the Lord in my womb is the one who will magnify all of God's attributes to the world God God my Savior Jesus salvation the only one who will take away the sins of his own people my own sins and he will be called son of the highest the phrase is

El Elion El means God and it's the Lord God in excelsis it's God most elevated is what the one inside of me will be called Jesus Christ is not a created angel he is not a spirit making appearances on earth but he is the only co-existent eternal God the son creator of all without beginning without end who took on a growing fetus body inside the womb of simple Mary in middle of nowhere Nazareth in verse 32 Luke 132 the angel says the Lord God will give 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 you got your finger there in

Luke you've turned to Matthew 1 I want to do this fast but I don't want to lose you but what I want you to see are two things this reference to the father from the line of David you know he says the throne God will give him the throne of his father David Jesus gets the lineage of David from both Mary and Joseph it's because we get two different genealogies there's a genealogy in Matthew chapter 1 and there's another genealogy in Luke chapter 3 you're welcome to flip back and forth and also study this more carefully yourself the genealogy in Matthew chapter 1 leads to Joseph who is legally the father of David and the angel refers to Joseph son of David and so legally in terms of the census within Israel Joseph is of the line of David Jesus is born legally into the household of Joseph son of David but Mary is also from the line of David and if you look at

[32 : 48] Luke chapter 3 it's a different genealogy than Matthew chapter 1 Mary's lineage which is given in Luke chapter 3 it also includes the line of David so the other names are different but the meeting point is from this line of David both in Mary and in Joseph and if you think about the audience of each of these books Matthew was written for Jews who would believe the gospel and they wanted to be able to see this like tracing out the patriarchal line it leads to Jesus Christ born under the house of Joseph in Bethlehem all of the prophecies are fulfilled but Luke's gospel comes later all of us need to understand how is this good news for me as well and we can look at Luke's genealogy and you see where this one ends up it goes all the way to Adam described as the son of

God who God made in his image see the promise to Adam's wife Eve is that the seed of woman will destroy the serpent's head and this is good news for Jew and Gentile for all of us who can trace our lineage all the way back to Adam and in our catechism today we read how in Adam's fall sinned we all but now from that same fallen line comes the seed of woman the lineage of Mary the lineage of Eve all the way back it's God keeping his promise for the whole world isn't this a beautiful gospel how is it that the seed of woman could bring a savior the old testament always describes the seed of a man you know Abraham to your seed it's always in reference to the man's line but the promise in Genesis 3:15 is the seed of woman would crush the serpent's head and here in the genealogy in Luke 3 and the promise of Mary without the physical help of

Joseph bringing to not only that he is who he says he is but he will do what he says he will do what does he say he will do to Mary look at verse 34 Mary said to the angel, how can this be since I do not know a man?

This is the biblical sense of knowing. She's saying, I am a virgin. Verse 35. And the angel answered and said to her, the Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the highest will overshadow you.

Therefore, also that the Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God. Well, in the Apostles Creed, we confess these two things. That Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit and Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary.

[36 : 00] Mary herself, an eyewitness telling Luke, the historian, her eyewitness account. She affirms this in verse 34. I am a virgin. I have never known a man.

And we're told that Jesus was, in verse 35, conceived this way. The Holy Spirit will come upon Mary and the power of the highest will overshadow you.

God's creative power as an overshadowing act. There's no need for contact. God will truly generate a male child in the womb of this young lady, Mary, by the creator himself.

His own power through which he brought the world into being. The Holy Spirit will give to the God-man, Jesus Christ, the divine nature.

Mary, from her egg, will give to Jesus Christ, the human nature. God himself would miraculously cause the Y chromosome of a male to be in the female egg.

[37 : 07] This is genetically, biologically impossible. Scientists would have no way of replicating this, even on the quote-unquote lowest forms of life. This will be a male created in the womb of a female without the help of another human male.

This is an act of God. In verse 34, he's described as the Holy One. See, our Lord Jesus Christ knew no sin.

2 Corinthians 5.21 Our Lord Jesus Christ did no sin. 1 Peter 2.22 Our Lord Jesus Christ had no sin.

1 John 3.5 We're told that the body of our Lord Jesus Christ was prepared for him inside Mary's womb by the Holy Spirit of God. Hebrews 10.5 So how did this sinless Holy One enter and develop and grow inside the womb of Mary?

Verse 35 gives us this word, overshadowed. That the Holy Spirit would overshadow Mary. Gabriel uses the same word with this promise to Mary that the Old Testament had used to describe the presence of God in the Holy of Holies.

[38 : 31] In the Jewish tabernacle. In Exodus chapter 40, verse 35. The New Testament is given to us in Greek. The Old Testament in Hebrew.

But there was also a Hebrew, I'm sorry, a Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament called the Septuagint. So when the New Testament uses a Greek word, you can see where that Greek word was used in this Greek translation of the Old Testament.

And we're told in Exodus 40.35 that Moses was unable to enter the tent of meeting. Why? Because the glory of the Lord had overshadowed and filled it.

The cloud had settled and rested over it. And the glory of the Lord so filled the tent of meeting that Moses couldn't get in. That's the overshadowing glory of God.

The same thing happened at the dedication of the temple. Where the priests couldn't come in physically. They were blocked because of the weight of God's glory. It so filled the temple. That's overshadowing glory of the Holy Spirit.

[39 : 36] It's the spiritual splendor. All of God's attributes manifested in the space and time of earth. So that there's a physical block.

I can't even approach the Holy of Holies. Because God's presence has overshadowed it. And that's the promise given to Mary. God will do what he says he will do.

The glory of God will overshadow you, young Mary. God will do what he says he will do. Isaiah 7.14 says, The Lord himself will give you a sign.

Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name Emmanuel. Well, there's that suffix again, L, which means God.

God with us. God with us. Mary's womb became a holy of holies for the holy son of the holy God.

[40 : 47] God with us. Conceived by the Holy Spirit. Born of the Virgin Mary. Now look at Luke 1.37.

Do you believe that God will do what he says he will do? I love how Gabriel's message from the presence of God himself. It ends with encouragement.

Luke 1.37. For with God, nothing will be impossible. I think the best translation is by the American Standard Version of this phrase.

No word of God shall be void of power. No word of God shall be void of power. God will do what he says he will do.

God accomplishes his purposes through the power of his word. God bless you. God bless you. Psalm 33.6 and 9. By the word of the Lord, the heavens were made.

[41 : 50] And by the breath of his mouth, all their host. For he spoke and it came to be. He commanded and it stood firm.

No word of God shall be void of power. Brothers and sisters, trust that the Lord will do what he promises.

Make sure you're ready. Let's be among the remnant that are waiting for the coming of the king. God did what he said he would do.

Our Lord Jesus Christ came to this earth just the way God promised he would. And our Lord Jesus Christ is coming again. His kingdom is advancing.

And his kingdom will be established. The final promise is not simply that he would come to earth and die for our sins.

[42 : 49] But that he would be risen. And that he is coming again. And of his throne and dominion there will be no end. That's the end of the story. We long for the Messiah.

Come quickly, Lord Jesus. We search the scriptures. We pray together. We encourage one another. Heaven will again invade earth when the world least expects it.

Let's be ready. Would you pray with me? Father, we thank you for your promises. Father, we thank you for your revelation of yourself through Jesus Christ.

The full radiance of your glory. Please prepare our hearts so that we will be ready for when you come again. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[43 : 51] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Well, we get to celebrate the Lord's Supper in the most fitting way, because we celebrate his work and his first coming, and we look forward to the promises that he will still fulfill in his second coming.

We celebrate the Lord's Supper every week together. This is for believers, for those of you who know that this is the blood of your Savior, shed for the forgiveness of your sins.

It's the only way you could be right with God. We're told to partake in a worthy manner to make sure that we are in the faith, receiving Christ by grace alone.

[45 : 58] We're to keep the feast with sincere hearts, grounded in God's promises, not with malice or wickedness in our lives. If you trust in the worth of Christ's blood to forgive you fully, and you know that the Spirit of Jesus dwells in you, then come to his table, visitors, to feed your faith upon him.

He is set before you today again, Christ clothed in his gospel. I want to give you two encouragements as you meditate and celebrate the glorious work of Jesus for you.

Think of those comforting words from Gabriel to Mary. These are God's words for other sinners like you and me, as they were for Mary. You can approach the holy, holy, holy God now through Christ.

You don't need to be afraid. In Christ, you have found favor with God. Jesus Christ is great here with his people.

He is exalted, magnified, declared to be great, son of the highest. So by coming forward, you're proclaiming that this is who Jesus is, that he is the Lord God himself, who will have the throne of his father, David.

[47 : 13] He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end. This is what you're proclaiming with God's people as we prepare for his return. And if the spirit of the Lord is making your heart tender again today, praise him.

You might be asking like Mary, how can this be for a person like me? And so hold on to the promise that the Holy Spirit is the one who moves to give new life.

He overshadows his people still. He moves with the power of the highest. And Jesus Christ, the Holy One, is the Son of God through whom all of this is made possible.

For with God, nothing will be impossible. So by coming to the Lord's Supper, you're declaring like Mary as well, I receive this by faith.

Behold the bond slave of the Lord, and let it be in my life according to your word. Respond that same way today. Amen. You know, and as we see around the Christmas decorations, there's one that I think is a great reminder, and it's the wreath.

[48 : 26] The wreath has the spikely leaves of the evergreen, reminding us of the crown of thorns, and then the red berries on it, which remind us of the drops of Christ's blood. But when you see that, remember that's of his first coming.

And a picture of his second coming is right here, the banquet feast, when he would drink the wine that he's been waiting to drink in celebration of all his bride being with him in his father's house forever and ever.

And of his dominion, there will be no end. So keep those two images in mind with the person and work of Jesus Christ for you again today. You may be served. Thank you.