

The Annunciation (1:25-38)

26 Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by 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. The virgin's name was Mary. 28 And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!"

- This event is called the Annunciation, from a Latin word for “announcement.” It leads to the amazing miracle of the Incarnation of God the Son!
- Nazareth was extremely obscure: Luke has to tell his readers in what part of the country you might find it. Note the contrast with Jerusalem.
- Gabriel seems to be God’s personal messenger. He is the only angel to be named in Scripture besides Michael.
- In the Hebrew culture, betrothal was a step before marriage. It was stronger than what we call engagement and could only be broken by a divorce.
- A betrothal could take place as early as 12 years old. There is a wide range of opinion as to Mary’s age.
- Joseph was from the house of David, so he would have had princely status.

Gabriel's Greeting

- The Greek word *Kaire* can mean to rejoice, and is often used that way in the New Testament. However, in other settings, this word is just a simple greeting. It seems likely that what Gabriel said to Mary was “Shalom.”
- *Kaire* is sometimes rendered as “rejoice” and sometimes as a greeting. The older English word “hail” was simply a greeting which is like our “hello.” It has no elevated significance. Gabriel wasn’t giving her a special greeting. The Greek word *kecharitomene* means someone who has been favored by God with grace.
- Mary was blessed among women because God chose her to bear the Messiah and bear the One who is God in the flesh. But we don’t pray to her, and we certainly don’t say that all graces come to us Christians through her.
- The word that Gabriel uses is not reserved for Mary. Paul applies it to ALL Christians: “...He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love... to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved” (Eph. 1:4, 6).

29 *But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was.* 30 *Then 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 bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS.* 32 *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.* 33 *And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.”*

- Mary was bothered by this and starts contemplating the nature of this greeting.
- Gabriel says not to be afraid because she has found favor with God. We see this expression or similar expressions in the Old Testament.
- Jesus' conception will be miraculous because it will be through a virgin. Don't confuse the Virgin Birth with the Roman Catholic doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, which asserts that Mary herself was conceived without sin.
- This child is named in Heaven! *Jesus* means *Yahweh is Salvation*, or *the Salvation of Yahweh*. The Hebrew name *Yeshua* is a shortened form of *Yehoshua*. In English we have typically rendered it as *Joshua*.
- What Gabriel says about Mary's Son:
 - He will be great.
 - He will be called the Son of the Highest or *El Elyon*.
 - Gabriel says that the Lord will give Him the throne of His father David, a reference to the throne of Israel.
 - He will reign over the house of Jacob (meaning the people of Israel) forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end. He has eternal life and will be an eternal King.

34 Then Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I do not know a man?” 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 Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.

36 Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren. 37 For with God nothing will be impossible.” 38 Then Mary said, “Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.

- Notice how Mary’s question is different from Zacharias’ question. It doesn’t demand proof. Mary used a Semitic euphemism to remind the angel that she is a virgin. Her question is a “how” question and is not lacking in faith.
- Gabriel leaves a lot of mystery in his answer. The Holy Spirit coming upon people is an important idea in Luke’s writings.
- He says that power of the Highest will overshadow her. This word speaks of God’s radiating presence. It was used to speak of His presence over the Tabernacle, as well as Peter healing people with his shadow.
- He will be called the Son of God. This is a term with two meanings. It speaks to the relationship that the kings of Israel had with God, but in the case of Jesus we know it means something more.
- Mary’s response is beautiful – there is no hesitation or bargaining. She was saying “yes” to being misunderstood and slandered.
- Joseph would struggle with this: “Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly” (Matthew 1:19).

Mary Visits Elizabeth (The Visitation) (1:39-45)

39 Now Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste, to a city of Judah, 40 and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. 41 And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. 42 Then she spoke out with a loud voice and said, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! 43 But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? 44 For indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. 45 Blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord.”

- We don't know exactly what their family relationship was, as the two women are primarily identified with different tribes (Judah and Levi).
- The unborn John leaps for joy when he hears Mary's voice! Besides John, Elizabeth is the first person in the NT to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Perhaps she understood by the Spirit that Mary's child was more than just the Messiah.

Mary's Song (The Magnificat) (1:46-56)

*46 And Mary said: “My soul magnifies the Lord,
47 And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.
48 For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant;
For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed.
49 For He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name.*

50 *And His mercy is on those who fear Him from generation to generation.*

51 *He has shown strength with His arm;*

He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

52 *He has put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted the lowly.*

53 *He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent away empty.*

54 *He has helped His servant Israel, in remembrance of His mercy,*

55 *As He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed forever.”*

56 *And Mary remained with her about three months, and returned to her house.*

- The *Magnificat* has several different facets or focuses: (1) a personal aspect; (2) a social aspect dealing with **reversals**; and (3) a national aspect.
- Mary's song reveals a humble and intelligent young woman, learned in the Word of God. Her song resembles the prayer of Hannah in 1 Samuel 2.
- There is no thought here of her being sinless.
- She recognizes what an amazing thing it is that God has chosen her.
- She ends by putting this into a bigger context: God's goodness to people, even the reversals she mentions, are part of a bigger reversal, in which God is helping “His servant Israel.”
- God is bringing salvation to Israel, and it will be done through a Child whose very name is “salvation!”

All quotes NKJV except as noted. New King James Version®

Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.