

## The Birth of Jesus Foretold

<sup>26</sup> In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, <sup>27</sup> to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup> The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

<sup>29</sup> Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. <sup>30</sup> But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup> You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. <sup>32</sup> He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, <sup>33</sup> and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

<sup>34</sup> "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

<sup>35</sup> The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. <sup>36</sup> Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. <sup>37</sup> For no word from God will ever fail."

<sup>38</sup> "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

(Also read Luke 1:5-25)

## Study Questions

### 1. Who is Elizabeth and why is her being six months pregnant significant?

Luke 1 tells us that Elizabeth is Mary's older cousin who has been barren all her life until God answers her prayers for a child in her old age. Luke 1:5-25 tells the story of the angel Gabriel announcing to Zechariah that he and Elizabeth will have a child who is to be named John who will be a prophet like Elijah who will prepare Israel for the coming of the Messiah. Elizabeth praises God for having shown favor on her, removing the disgrace of being barren.

### 2. Who is the angel Gabriel, what does the Bible say about him?

Gabriel describes himself as an angel who stands in the presence of God. He is sent to earth as a messenger to Zechariah and to Mary. Elsewhere in the Bible he appears to Daniel to explain his visions. He is called an archangel, noted as serving with the Arch Angel Michael as watching over Israel.

### 3. What do we learn from the Bible about the town of Nazareth?

Nazareth is the hometown of Joseph and Mary. It is a small obscure village, apparently of lesser notoriety as Nathaniel, one of Jesus disciples asks if anything good could ever come from there. The people of Nazareth revolted against Jesus when he denied their intentions to use Jesus to draw fame to their town.

### 4. What is the significance of Mary being a virgin?

It fulfills Isaiah's prophecy that the Messiah would be born of a virgin. The virgin birth is implied in the Old Testament as early as Genesis 3:15, which promised that "the seed of woman" would be

the victor over Satan and sin. It is expressly predicted in Isaiah 7:14: "Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel" (NASB). According to Matthew 1:22-23, this prophecy was fulfilled in Mary. She is called a "virgin" in Luke 1:27

### 5. What is the significance of Joseph being a descendent of David?

The Messiah was to come from the lineage of David. Commentary notes...

Old Testament - The prophets of ancient Israel looked for a day when this promise would be fulfilled in an ultimate descendant of David — the Messiah – who would rule over the nation. Isaiah 11:1, in a great messianic passage, tells us that “there shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.” Jesse, as we learn elsewhere, was the father of David. Jeremiah writes: “Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: ‘The Lord is our righteousness’” (Jeremiah 23:5–6).

New Testament - The two genealogies in Matthew and Luke, however, differ from one another and this has led to questions as to whether the two gospels contradict one another. Matthew begins with Abraham and ends with Jesus. Luke begins with Jesus “being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph” (Luke 3:23) and works backward beyond Abraham all the way to Adam. Matthew traces the line through Solomon, David’s son (the royal line), while Luke traces it through Nathan, a different son (a non-royal line).

### 6. What does Gabriel mean when he says that Mary is “highly favored”?

He let her know that she was blessed and **highly favored**. She was **favored** because, of all the women who **would** ever live, God chose her. **Mary** was blessed because God chose her to be the mother of Jesus, the son of God. ... If we are truly Christians, then we have the **favor** of God on our lives because He has chosen us.

### 7. What is God’s plan for Mary?

Gabriel declares that Mary would conceive and give birth to a son and call him Jesus.

### 8. What is the child’s name to be? What does it mean? Why does God choose the baby’s name? (note that God also names John (in Luke 1:13) why? What is the significance of who names the child?

He is to be called Jesus which means “he saves” or “savior”. In Genesis, God gives Adam the authority to name all the other creatures, thus giving him (humanity) dominion over the other creatures. The idea follows that when one names something, one claims dominion or authority over it. When God names Jesus and John, it signifies that God has authority over them. Notice, that we are not given God’s name, we do not have authority to call God by name, only attribute. God simply tells us to say that God is, “I Am” is God’s answer.

**9. What is Mary’s response to Gabriel? How does it differ from Zechariah’s response to Gabriel in Luke 1:18?**

<sup>34</sup> “How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?”

<sup>18</sup> Zechariah asked the angel, “How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well along in years.”

Mary asks how will this be? Zechariah asks how can this be?

**10. How does Gabriel answer Mary’s question? How does he answer Zechariah’s question?**

<sup>35</sup> The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.

<sup>9</sup> The angel said to him, “I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news. <sup>20</sup> And now you will be silent and not able to speak until the day this happens, because you did not believe my words, which will come true at their appointed time.”

**11. Why does Gabriel tell Mary about Elizabeth’s pregnancy?**

He offers this news as evidence of God’s ability to do what God says – nothing is impossible with God. <sup>36</sup> Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month.

**12. What is the promise Gabriel declares to Mary in verse 27? Where else in the Bible can we find this promise (may use other words).**

<sup>37</sup> For no word from God will ever fail.” Other versions read “For nothing is impossible with God.”

Other quotes include:

- 1.) But Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.” ~ Matthew 19:26 ESV
- 2.) For nothing will be impossible with God. ~ Luke 1:37
- 3.) I can do all things through him who strengthens me. ~ Philippians 4:13
- 4.) Jesus looked at them and said, “With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God.” ~ Mark 10:27 ESV
- 5.) He said to them, “Because of your little faith. For truly, I say to you, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, move from here to there, and it will move and nothing will be impossible for you.” ~ Matthew 17:20 ESV
- 6.) And the LORD said, Behold, the people [is] one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. ~ Genesis 11:6 KJV
- 7.) I know that thou canst do every [thing], and [that] no thought can be withholden from thee. ~ Job 42:2 KJV
- 8.) For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. ~ John 3:16 KJV
- 9.) Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive [them], and ye shall have [them]. ~ Mark 11:24 KJV
- 10.) Fear thou not; for I [am] with thee: be not dismayed; for I [am] thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. ~ Isaiah 41:10 KJV
- 11.) 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: ~ Jeremiah 32:17 KJV
- 12.) What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ~ Romans 8:31 ESV
- 13.) In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. ~ Proverbs 3:6

*14.) No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide a way of escape, that you may be able to endure it. ~ 1 Corinthians 10:13 ESV*

*15.) Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for me? ~ Jeremiah 32:27 ESV*

**13. What is Mary's answer to God's call?**

<sup>38</sup> *"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled."*