

**The Promised King**  
**Luke 1:30-33**  
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*<sup>26</sup> In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, <sup>27</sup> to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary.<sup>28</sup> And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" <sup>29</sup> But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be.<sup>30</sup> And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup> And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. <sup>32</sup> 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, <sup>33</sup> and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." – Luke 1:30-33, ESV*

**Introduction: The Ultimate Christmas Surprise**

What's the best Christmas surprise you ever got? I laugh the car commercials this time of year that show husbands surprising their wives with new cars or trucks or sometimes a pair of brand-new vehicles, one of each of them. Seriously, whose Christmas morning is new cars in the driveway?

For me, the best Christmas surprises are always non-material, and often something my kids will say or do that shows they "get it" and understand what Christmas is really all about. Those are the things that warm my heart.

If you look online for the best Christmas surprises ever, you'll see some videos of servicemen who come home for Christmas and surprise their family members. One great video, titled "The Best Christmas Surprise Ever!," is of a couple who find a fun way to surprise their family members with the news that they're having a baby. The couple, Patrick and Shannon, made shirts that said, "Best Grandpa Ever," "My Grandma Is the Coolest," and "I Love My Aunt Kait." The reaction of Patrick's father, in particular, is what has made the video so popular.

As great as some of these videos are, no modern-day Christmas surprise could ever top the original Christmas surprise. It's become so familiar to us that we don't often enough think about how amazing and surprising it was. To a young virgin woman who was engaged to be married in a small town, the angel Gabriel was sent with the most unexpected, most surprising news anyone could ever receive.

The best surprises are ones that are long-awaited and much-needed and yet come in a very unexpected way. Well, God's people had been waiting for thousands of years for the promised Messiah to come, the salvation He came to bring is the most-needed thing in the world, for the whole world and for everyone in it, and the way God decided to keep His promise and bring this long-awaited, much-needed Savior was in the most unexpected way.

What the angel Gabriel says to Mary when he announces the surprising coming of this long-awaited and much-needed Savior is powerful, as so much of the promises and purposes of God are tightly packed into just a few short verses. Listen again to these powerful lines: "*Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup> And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. <sup>32</sup> 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, <sup>33</sup> and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.*"

Now, let's unpack what we find out about this promised King in these verse:

### I. How the King Comes: The Virgin Birth, vv. 30-31

First of all, we see how the promised King comes, to this young woman who has found favor with God. Mary is betrothed to Joseph, who is part of the house and lineage of David. Betrothal was more than our modern engagement. It was a legally binding arrangement of marriage that required a divorce to undo. So, Mary was joined to a descendent of David, which is important, because her Son would now legally be an offspring of David. And yet the angel comes before Mary and Joseph have actually been married, because the promised One is to be born of a virgin and is to be the offspring of a woman.

To understand the significance and origin of this promise, we go all the way back to the beginning, to the first promise of the Gospel, which comes in Genesis 3:15, as part of God's curse on Satan for his part in the sinful fall of Adam and Eve.

God says to the serpent:

*“Because you have done this,  
cursed are you above all livestock  
and above all beasts of the field;  
on your belly you shall go,  
and dust you shall eat  
all the days of your life.  
<sup>15</sup> I will put enmity between you and the woman,  
and between your offspring and her offspring;  
he shall bruise your head,  
and you shall bruise his heel.”*

And then, after this word to the serpent, God speaks to Mary about the pain of childbirth. It's amazing that God promises that the offspring of the woman was going to be the one to crush the head of the serpent. “Offspring” was a term most commonly used to refer to the descendent of a man, and sometimes of a man and a woman together, but almost never of just a woman. The word, translated as “offspring” here in the ESV, is also often translated as “seed” and it can refer to a seed planted in the ground that brings forth plant life or the seed of a man that goes into a woman to make a child. In other words, if this word is ever associated with a single gender, it is always associated with men. Men have “seed” in this sense, not women. And yet here it is used to refer to the offspring or the “seed” of the woman. It is a very strikingly unusual usage.

As Scripture unfolds, this promised seed of the woman is further identified as a promised seed of Abraham, and then more specifically as a promised seed of Isaac and then of Jacob, and then as a ruler who will arise from the tribe of Judah, and then finally as a promise to be from the house and lineage of David. Each step of the way, God is narrowing the focus of where we can expect to find this promised offspring, the great snake-crusher.

Then, through Isaiah, God comes back to the woman, when He makes a promise in Isaiah 7:14: *“the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”* Now, this verse is actually very controversial, as familiar as it is. Many Bible scholars and critics of Christianity have claimed that this promise refers to a child who was going to be born to the royal family, to King Ahaz's household, in the days of Isaiah, as a sign that the Lord was going to give Judah

victory and deliverance from the Assyrians. The promised child, they claim, was King Hezekiah, who sought the Lord's favor and saw the Lord miraculously deliver Jerusalem from the Assyrian army.

Yet, as we have seen in John's Gospel, often in Scripture, something can be said or promised which has one meaning on the surface and a deeper significance below the surface. That's what's happening with Isaiah 7:14. Yes, Hezekiah did seek the Lord and the Lord did show that He was with His people when He delivered them from the Assyrian army. Yet in an even more powerful way, Isaiah 7:14 points further ahead to another virgin who would conceive in a miraculous way and give birth to a very extraordinary child, One who would indeed be Immanuel in the flesh, God-with-us in human form.

But why Mary? Was it just because she was a virgin who had just been made part of the House of David? No, it was because she found favor with God. When Gabriel tells Mary, "*You have found favor with God,*" he is telling her she has received God's grace. Thus, Mary is brought into the redemption story the same way anyone ever is – by the grace of God. God showed His special grace to Mary, and we're never told why. We speculate that she must have been very special – very devout, very holy, etc. – but the Bible puts the focus where it should be and where we should focus, too: on the grace of God. Mary has found favor with the Lord. She has been chosen by grace. And all that flows from God's grace resounds to God's glory alone!

## **II. What the King Will Be Called, v. 31-32**

Gabriel also tells Mary what she is going to name her son: Jesus – "you shall call his name Jesus."

### **A. Jesus**

The name "Jesus" is our rendering of the Greek version of the name Joshua, or Y'shua. This name means "YaHWeH saves" or "YaHWeH is salvation" or even simply "salvation." While Gabriel does not tell Mary why she is to name her son Jesus, he does tell Joseph in a dream, "You will call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." (Matthew 1:21)

Two important people in the Old Testament have this name. The most famous is the Joshua who leads the people of Israel across the Jordan River and into the Promised Land following the death of Moses. This is the "Joshua" who fought the battle of Jericho, although Joshua himself would object that he did no such thing! The LORD fought the battle and brought the walls of Jericho down. Still, this Joshua is remembered as the man who led God's people into the Promised Land. But Hebrews tells us that this Joshua did not, in fact, bring God's people into the rest God promised them. The real Promised Land of Rest is found only in the true and greater Joshua, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The other Joshua in the Old Testament was the High Priest over God's people after the return from exile, when the second Temple was built. So, Joshua is the one who brings God's people into the Promised Land and the one who is High Priest over the people of God.

Yet the true significance of the name Jesus is found in those times when the Old Testament speaks of YaHWeH becoming the salvation of His people. We read one of them earlier in the service, in Isaiah 12:1-2 –

*You will say in that day:*

*"I will give thanks to you, O LORD,  
for though you were angry with me,*

*your anger turned away,  
that you might comfort me.  
Behold, God is my salvation;  
I will trust, and will not be afraid;  
for the LORD GOD is my strength and my song,  
and he has become my salvation.*

By the way, when will this happen? When is “that day”? When will the LORD be the salvation of His people? Isaiah 11:1, the previous chapter, sets the context for the fulfillment of this promise:

*There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse,  
and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.  
And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him,  
the Spirit of wisdom and understanding,  
the Spirit of counsel and might,  
the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.*

The shoot who comes from the stump of Jesse. In other words, David’s kingly house will be cut down, and then from the cut-down stump will come an offspring who will be the branch to bear fruit. This is Jesus. And when he comes, it will be said in that day, “*The Lord has become my salvation.*”

Another key place where we see this line is in Psalm 118 –

The LORD is my strength and my song;  
he has become my salvation.

This rich psalm is a powerful picture of Jesus’ coming. When will the Lord (YaHWeH) become my salvation. As Psalm 118 says later, it comes when

*“The stone that the builders rejected  
has become the cornerstone.  
This is the LORD’s doing;  
it is marvelous in our eyes.  
This is the day that the LORD has made;  
let us rejoice and be glad in it.”*

Jesus – YaHWeH is salvation. The LORD has become my salvation. What a name!!

## **B. Son of the Most High**

His name will be Jesus, but He “*will be called the Son of the Most High.*” This promised one will be so great as to be worthy to be called Son of the Most High. The great kings of Israel and Judah were sometimes called sons of God, but Jesus would be different. He would not be called “Son of the Most High” just by title and His greatness would not be tied to earthly accomplishments or achievements. Rather, he is great in Himself and He will be called “Son of the Most High” by nature.

Because Jesus is so great by nature and is the Son of the Most High by nature, when he enters into His kingly office, He is able to do so forever, as we will see in a few minutes.

But we should see something else in this title for Jesus, too. Not only is He, by nature, the Son of God, but He is also, in His person, the restoration of the people of God back to what we were created to be, sons of God. Being made in God's image, we were made to be sons of God. This is the point Luke highlights in his genealogy of Jesus in Luke 3, which traces Jesus' ancestry back to Adam, the Son of God. So, the eternal Son of God, by becoming truly and fully human, takes our human nature and restores it to its intended dignity. We are able to be sons of God because He is the Son of God, but in uniting His nature to ours and making us sons of God, He restores us back to what we were intended to be from the beginning.

### III. How the King Will Reign, vv. 32-33

But Jesus will not just be great and be called Son of the Most High, He will also truly and eternally reign over God's people – *“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”*

#### A. On David's Throne

God had made an astounding promise to King David 1,000 years before the angel Gabriel visited Mary in Nazareth. If Mary received the greatest Christmas surprise ever, the original Christmas surprise, then King David's surprise message from God is definitely in the Top 5. After King David conquered Jerusalem and brought the Ark of the Covenant into the city, he wanted to build a Temple, to build a house for God. But God sent word through the prophet Nathan that David was not going to be the one to build a house of God. Instead, God was going to build a house for David –

*“Moreover, the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. <sup>12</sup> When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. <sup>13</sup> He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. <sup>14</sup> I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, <sup>15</sup> but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. <sup>16</sup> And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.”* – 2 Samuel 7:11-16, ESV

This is an amazing promise, a promise of an eternal dynasty, and at its heart is verse 13: *“He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.”* Now, many people see Solomon as the obvious fulfillment of this promise. Solomon built the Temple, and the Davidic dynasty through Solomon reigned in Jerusalem until the year 586 BC, and the Temple Solomon build stood just as long. That's a single dynasty reigning for over 400 years and a Temple standing for nearly 400 years. Then, the Temple was rebuilt after 70 years and stood for another 400+ years until the year 70 AD. 400 years is a long time for a dynasty, and 800 years is a long time for Temple, but that's not what God promised. He promised forever, and so Solomon and his Temple can't be the ultimate fulfillment of this amazing promise God made to David.

The throne of David had been vacant for almost 600 years by the time Gabriel came to Mary in Nazareth. That's considerably longer than the Davidic dynasty had reigned in Jerusalem. But now the throne would be occupied again, because God would give Jesus the throne of His Father, David.

#### B. Over the House of Jacob

Jesus would sit on David's throne and rule over God's people – “the house of Jacob” – forever. “The house of Jacob” is a way of referring to all of God's people. Jacob is the son of Isaac who was later re-

named Israel. So, “house of Jacob” is another name for Israel, and Israel is a way of referring to all of God’s people.

Certainly, many people in Judah and Galilee, among God’s people, expected the Messiah to be an earthly king from the line of David who would lead the nation of Israel in victory over her enemies. But such a king could never have given God’s people what they really needed.

God’s people didn’t need relief from Roman occupation but from the siege of their hearts by sin. They didn’t need liberation from Rome’s taxation but from Satan’s accusation and the Law’s condemnation, This is the reign King Jesus came to bring, a truly eternal and truly liberating reign over God’s people forever!

### **C. Forever**

When is Jesus ruling? Now! How long will Jesus rule? Forever!

Queen Elizabeth II is 92 years old. She has been on the throne of the British Commonwealth for 24,413 days. On February 6<sup>th</sup>, she will have been queen for 67 years! This makes her the longest-reigning monarch in the history of England and the 6<sup>th</sup> longest-reigning monarch in the history of the world. But even Louis XIV’s reign of over 72 years can’t compare with King Jesus’ reign, which has been going strong for almost 2,000 years since He ascended and sat at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, and His reign is just beginning. He will reign forever!

He is not waiting to begin His reign. He is reigning now. As 1 Cor 15:25 says, “*For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.*” Jesus is not reigning just to defeat Rome, but He is defeating all sin and death, and when His reign is glorious consummated, ALL sin and death will be gone forever!! Imagine what a great Christmas surprise that will be – NO more SIN, NO more DEATH, NO more FOREVER!

### **A King Like No Other**

Jesus is a king unlike any other. In His nature, in His reign, in His achievements, He reigns supreme and unrivaled. So, what does that mean for us? The Bible tell us “*Put not your trust in princes, in a son of man, in whom there is no salvation.*” – Psalm 146:3

This Christmas, who are you trusting? ONE king alone is truly great. His birth was uniquely great. His life on earth was uniquely great. His death was uniquely great. His resurrection was uniquely great, His reign at the right hand of the Father is uniquely great, and His coming return will be uniquely great! Will you worship and trust Him along this Christmas and always?