

Come and See the Son of God – Lk 1:26-38

The past two weeks we've looked at the coming of Christ 2000 years ago, from the perspective of the prophet Isaiah in the OT

The first week we saw him as the Promised One (Is 9)

The one set apart by God to save and deliver his people

Sometimes referred to as the Messiah, which translated is, the Christ

Last week we saw him as the King of Kings (ch 11)

I asked you – Do you know him?

Does he reign in your life? Or do you just pay lip service to him?

This week we turn our attention to the perspective of the angel Gabriel found in Lk 1

Where, in a conversation with Mary, he speaks of this Promised King as the Son of God

I hope you've come ready to see him for who he is

Maybe to renew your passion and wonder this Christmas if you already know him

Or to see him for the very first time if you don't

Read Lk 1:26-38

No wonder the first disciples invited/encouraged people to come and see him

No wonder God's people have done the same down through the centuries

No wonder someone invited *you* to come and see

Because they've found the One referred to throughout the Scriptures – the Son of God

The One who saved their soul and changed their life

The One who they hope will save *your* soul and change *your* life as well, if you let him

I hope you will

And with that at stake, it's fitting that . . .

He was foretold by angels – Are you listening? (v 26-30)

Given the significance of the situation – that God was becoming man and entering into our world . . . an angelic announcement was appropriate

It's probably the only way that Mary would have believed it

Maybe the only way she would have listened; but listen she did

Gabriel appeared to Mary *in the 6th month* (26) of Elizabeth's pregnancy w/ John the Bap

She was a *virgin betrothed to a man* (27) – betrothal was a legally binding form of engagement, broken only by an official divorce

There was no physical intimacy and no proximity of living together, but it was legal

The man she was engaged to was *Joseph, of the house of David* (27)

The mere mention of the house of David would have quickened the pulse of any God-fearing Jew, because David was their hero and they hung all their hopes on another deliverer like him

Luke's purpose was to establish that Jesus was Joseph's *legal* son, and therefore of David's lineage, and the rightful heir to his throne (32-33)

28 – *Greetings, O favored one*

Unfortunately, this verse has been the source of many unbiblical beliefs down through the centuries, including today

Much of that is due to a translation in the 5th century called the Latin Vulgate

The LV was ordered by a pope, and therefore considered authoritative in the Catholic church for belief and doctrine

In fact, it's considered by some in Catholicism, to be better than even the original language manuscripts . . .

But even prominent *Catholic* scholars agree, that the LV translation for this verse is too strong a rendering for Gr (Hughes, 31)

It reads – “Ave Maria gratia plena” or “Hail Mary full of grace”

It eventually gave rise to the medieval idea that Mary had *every* gift, not only spiritual, but secular, even above those given to angels

That led to the idea that she could *dispense* grace as God could, since she was full of it, resulting in prayers being offered to her

And, in 1854, Pope Pius IX declared that she was born without sin (Immaculate Conception), based on the thinking that she was “full of grace” at birth, and therefore empty of sin

2 Conclusions

(1) Even IF “full of grace” was an accurate translation, when taken in the context of the rest of Scripture, the most you could say is that Mary was blessed to overflowing with God's unmerited favor (she had *found favor with God* – 30b)

But there's *no* biblical basis for saying she was *sinless*, or had every gift, or that she should be prayed to for grace

In fact, there's plenty to the contrary (All have sinned; Our Father in heaven)

Even if it was an accurate translation, the inferences re Mary are not biblical

(2) When it comes to Mary, people tend to go to one of 2 extremes – they either magnify her too much, or recognize her too little

The Blessed Virgin Mary *is* an apt title, but not because she was sinless or full of grace

It's fitting because she was the only one of billions chosen to bear the Son of God

The only one with some of her likeness in his face

Don't throw the baby out with the bath water, just because some have made her more than she was; But keep her status in perspective, according to the Scriptures

Having said that, Mary *listened* to the angel's words; went over/over it in her mind (29)

The question is, are you? **Are you listening** to *God's* word?

Those who experience the birth of the Savior in their *heart*, are those who listen and consider the message of God's Word to them

It's those who are humble enough to contemplate and admit the condition of their life

Or think about the destiny of their soul

Christmas is not for the proud and self-sufficient

The Son of God comes to humble people like Mary who realize can't make it w/out him

People who realize their weakness and spiritual lack

God *has* spoken – in his Word, and through his Son

In 5:25 – *those who hear the Son of God will live*

Are you listening? Do you hear what I hear?

That God sent his Son into the world to save you from your sins?

That's the message of Christmas – listen carefully; consider it for yourself this morning

He was foretold by angels, and he was also . . .

He was born of a virgin – Are you amazed? (v31, 34-37)

Mary's like timeout here; I hear ya; I'm listening

There's just one little problem – I'm a virgin

You know – it takes two to tango? That sort of thing

It was an honest question (34)

God welcomes honest questions from hearts that seek answers

It's the cynical questions of disbelief that present a problem

Gabriel says that God will make it happen (35a)

That he would *overshadow* her (35) – that he would bring his *awesome* power/presence to bear in her body

Beyond that, words fail to describe it – because it's a miracle

How did it happen – God did it; If I could explain it, it wouldn't be miracle

We don't know *how* she conceived due to God's overshadowing presence, we just know she *did*

I hope that still amazes you; Does it?

Are you amazed that the Son of God was conceived/born of a *virgin*?

Or have you heard it so many times that you've become numb/calloused to the *wonder* of it all?

I hope that's not the case, because the virgin birth of Christ goes to show that . . .

Nothing is impossible with God (37)

Not the pregnancy of a barren woman (Elizabeth – 36); Nor the pregnancy of a virgin

That's something to be amazed about

Can I encourage you to do something this week?

Read the Christmas story in Lk 1-2 *slowly* . . .

Then stop for a few minutes to be amazed at the wonder of it all

Perhaps you'll see him from a whole new perspective, and realize that . . .

He was destined for greatness – Are you following? (v32-33)

Gabriel's explicit about it – *He will be great* (32); Any questions?

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 (32b-33)

He was saying that the coming Christ-child would fulfill God's promise made to King

David 1000 years earlier, in **2 Sam 7:16** –

Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.

Called the Davidic Covenant – the promise God made to David

The best part is that this applies to *all* people who come to God through *faith* in Christ

On this side of the cross, the *house of Jacob* means those who are saved

Paul makes that clear in **Gal 3:7** – *it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham*

Abe being Jacob's forefather – it is those of faith who are of Jacob's house

Gal 3:29 – *if you are Christ's* [saved through faith] *then you are Abraham's offspring*

You're of the house of Jacob

Not because of your ethnicity or lineage, but because of God's promise to save you through faith in his Son

That's why Gabriel's announcement applies to us

That's why the Son of God was/is destined for greatness – because he rules/reigns over all his people, and will for all time, without end

The question is . . . **Are you following?** Mary did – read v38a

It's not enough to look on from afar; You have to follow

That's why he came – to make followers/disciples

There's a phrase used in rabbinic tradition from the first century, to describe those who would closely follow a rabbi/teacher in NT times . . .

It was said that they were “covered in the dust of the rabbi”

They followed so close that . . .

They were covered in the dust kicked up by his feet

They wouldn't miss a single word or nuance that came from his mouth

They could talk to him and ask him questions

They could feel his love – sometimes tough, sometimes gentle

They could serve him faithfully and help accomplish his purposes

Those are the kind of followers *Jesus* came to lead

People like you and I who follow so closely that we're covered with his presence, his word, his truth, . . . his *salvation*

Are you following?

Because not only is he destined for greatness, he's also God in the flesh

He was foretold by angels, he was born of a virgin, he was destined for greatness, and . .

He was God in the flesh – Do you believe? (v 31-32, 35, 38)

Look at all these titles!

Son of the Most High (32); *Son of God* (35b); *Holy* (35b)

Jesus (31b) – which means Savior

Titles in those days not only indicated position, but nature

They were descriptions of a person's attributes

So to call someone *son* of their father was to say that they are just like their father

They have the same attributes; Same nature; Cut from the same cloth

In this case, Jesus is called *Son of the Most High* and *Son of God* – meaning he is of the same nature/essence as God; Implying that he is *equal* to God

Jn 5:18 – *This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God*

In v35 Gabriel says – *the child to be born will be called holy*

Why holy? Why not gracious, steadfast, just, merciful?

Because holiness is attribute that defines God *as* God, more than any other attribute

It's *the* attribute, *the* defining characteristic, from which all other attributes flow

Gabriel is removing any shred of doubt that this *holy* child, is God in the flesh

John's explicit about it in ch 1 – *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God . . . and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us*

In the beginning was Jesus, and Jesus was with God, and Jesus was God, and Jesus . . .

His birth confirms his humanity – that he's like us in every respect

His titles announce his deity – that he's God in every respect

Put the two together and he's God in the flesh

The question is – **Do you believe?**

Do you believe that . . .

That Jesus was and is the Son of God – God in the flesh?

That he came to seek and to save that which was lost?

Referring to you and I, who are separated from him due to our sin and guilt

That he died for your sin on the cross so you could be forgiven and free of that guilt
Christmas is just the beginning – he came, he lived, he died, and he rose again so that
he could save you from the consequences of your sins, and give you eternal life
with him, now and forever
That’s the Christmas story – do you believe?

Because whether you do or don’t makes all the difference in your life, *and* your death
Mary believed; So much so that despite the possible consequences of having a child out of
wedlock, she said to Gabriel – *Let it be to me according to your word* (38)
That’s belief – belief to the point of entrusting your entire life and well-being to the Son
of God; God in the flesh

If you believe like *that* this morning for the first time in your life, and want to be saved
If you want to be forgiven of your sins, and relieved of your guilt
If you want to be sure you’re a child of God
If you want to commit to living for him the rest of your life
If you want *him* to make all the difference in your life and your death and eternity

Pray with me right now
You can use my words to express your heart, or your own
Raise your hand and look at me
Pray for them

If you prayed with me – pick up a packet from ushers
Tell someone this week; Tell us next week on the Register
Sign up for the class (insert) – Foundations of the Faith
If you have questions, or want someone to pray with you . . .
Come down front after the service
One of our elders will be here and would welcome the opp to talk/pray with you

Close

Commitment total – after second service

Next week – last of our Christmas series; invite a friend or family member
Choir, Much rejoicing over the birth of our Savior