

The Promise of Jesus – Lk 1:26-38

Lk 1. This is the second message in a 5-part Christmas series focusing on the Christmas story. The account of how and why Jesus was born. And my hope, is that this series both enlightens and refreshes you. I hope you learn some *new* things along the way, and see some old ones in a whole new light.

Last week was the genealogy of Jesus, this week is the promise of Jesus. The promise of who he would be and what he would do. Promises so amazing they grab our attention and capture our gaze. Challenging and encouraging us to put our trust in him, and follow on.

Intro

Lk 1:26. I'm going to read through v35, and save remaining verses for the end. And as I do, keep an eye out for all the promises. [26] *In the sixth month* [the 6th month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, the mother of John the Baptist] *the angel Gabriel* [the same Gabriel who appeared to Daniel 550 years earlier (Dan 8:16)] *was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth,* [(**Map 11** ESV Study Bible) located in northern Israel] . . .

[He was sent] [27] *to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David.* [Betrothal in those days was a legally binding agreement that could only be broken by divorce. And during such time, it was culturally unacceptable to consummate the marriage.] *And the virgin's name was Mary.*

[28] *And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!"* [29] *But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be.* [Because that only happened to *special* people in days past. Leaders. Why would he say such a thing to a common teenager? It troubled her.]

[30] *And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.* [Wow.] [31] *And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus.* [32] *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,* [33] *and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."*

[34] *And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?"* [35] *And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God.* (ESV) In other words, *God* will do it. That's how. *God* will make you conceive.

➤ Did you notice all the future tense verbs? Those are the promises. Starting in v31. *You will conceive in your womb and bear a son.* It's a promise. *You shall call his name Jesus.* *He will be great* [v32] *and will be called the Son of the Most High.* And the Lord God *will* give, and he *will* reign, v33. *And of his kingdom there will be no end.* And v34 – *The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy.* All promises.

Jesus was promised:

That's the bottom line. And if we consider some of those promises, even for a moment, we'll come to a greater appreciation of him. A greater awe. A greater assurance for what he'll do. Starting with his miraculous birth.

Jesus was promised . . .

To be a miracle (v31,34-35)

A miracle of virgin birth, virgin conception. The formation of a child in Mary's womb apart from any sexual relations. The angel said in v31, *you will conceive in your womb and bear a son*; and in v34, Mary said, "*How will this be, since I am a virgin?*" Implying that the conception and birth of Jesus was going to happen before she consummated her marriage. That's a miracle. Jesus was promised to be a miracle.

And the response to Mary's question of *how*, is one of the most mysterious yet meaningful answers in all the Bible. V35 – "*The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.*" It's a spiritual thing, he says. The power and presence of the Holy *Spirit* will make it happen.

Just like the glory cloud overshadowed the tabernacle of *old* and led to miraculous things. Or the cloud on the Mount of Transfiguration. Or the overshadowing presence of the Spirit in *our* lives. To heal us or strengthen us or speak through us.

How could a virgin birth happen? The way every other miracle happens. The Holy Spirit of God. Intervening in her body to conceive a baby, create a life. Jesus was promised to be a miracle.

And if you're like me, you may not question that, but you might wonder why. Why does it matter? What's the big deal?

If that's you, let me give you four answers.

• 4 Reasons the Virgin Birth is Important

4 reasons it can't be minimized, rationalized, or rejected.

1. It ensured that Jesus is sinless. If Jesus was conceived by a woman *and* a man, he would have inherited the sin nature of Adam. Just like we do. For *by the one man's disobedience* [Adam's] *the many were made sinners.* Us. Rom 5:19. It doesn't say "by one man and one woman" the many were made sinners, but by one *man*. One *man's* disobedience. Implying that our sin nature passes through the man in God's eyes.

So the virgin birth, the virgin conception, ensured that Jesus had no sin. No sin *nature*. Confirmed by his sinless life. And that's vital for our salvation, because if he wasn't a *sinless* sacrifice, he wasn't a *sufficient* sacrifice. (Heb 9:13-14)

2. It ensured that Jesus is divine. Because the Holy Spirit of *God* was the agent of conception. The one who brought it about by his divine power and holy presence. Endowing Jesus with that *same* divinity, and same *holiness*. He will be called *holy* it says in v35.

3. It ensured the humanity of Jesus. Because Mary was his mother and she was a human being. He didn't just drop out of the sky. He's just like us. Enabling *him* to sympathize with our weaknesses, and *us* to draw near with confidence. (Heb 4:15-16)

4. It's in the Bible. Part of God's Word. God's message. God's truth. Dispense with *this* miracle, and we just as well dispense with them all. Dispense with this one, and Jesus isn't who he says he is.

4 reasons the virgin birth is important. Adding to our appreciation and awe, for the miracle of Jesus.

Second, moving a little quicker, he was promised . . .

To be great (v32)

V32 – *He will be great*. Great in power, great in wisdom, great in knowledge, everything. Surely that was in mind when Gabriel *spoke* these words on God’s behalf.

Like the great prophecies made by Isaiah. *Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace* (Is 9:6). The one on whom *the Spirit of the LORD* rests. *The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge*. Faithful and righteous. Followed by many and offering peace. (Is 11)

That’s greatness. So great that he gave his life for us. So great he’s coming again for us. So great he’s preparing a place for us. No wonder Gabriel said he would be great.

Third, he was promised . . .

To be the Son of God (v32,35)

V32 again. *He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High*. And v35b – *The child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God*. Two ways of saying the same thing. That Jesus would be God’s Son. Just like we saw last week in 2 Sam 7:14. When God told David regarding a future king from his line, *“I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son.”*

And the thing you need to know, is that sonship in the first century conveyed likeness. As the son of your father you were considered to be like him. Like the old **picture** I have of my Dad standing in the ocean as a young adult, with his arm raised. Every time it pops up on my screensaver I think it’s my brother Rick. He’s nearly identical.

But in the first century it was more than looks, it was attributes. So when Gabriel says Jesus will be called *the Son of the Most High* and *the Son of God*, he’s saying that Jesus would possess the same attributes of God. Fully divine in every respect, while fully man as well. Which makes him God in the flesh. God incarnate.

That ought to grab your attention and encourage your heart like nothing else.

Fourth, Jesus was promised . . .

To be a king (v32)

And not just any king, but a king in the line of David. *The royal line. [32] 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*. Meaning he too will be a king. Ruling and reigning over the kingdom promised to David. First laid out in 2 Sam 7, and then recounted in other Scriptures.

Like **Ps 89:4**. Where God is quoted as saying to David, *‘I will establish your offspring forever, and build your throne for all generations.’* Your kingship.

And **Ps 132:11** the same. *The LORD swore to David a sure oath from which he will not turn back: “One of the sons of your body I will set on your throne.”* Prophecies that God-fearing people clung to, until Gabriel showed up and made a promise. A promise that Jesus would be that king.

The king who would sit on the throne of our *hearts*, and the king who would sit on the throne of our *world* someday. *King of kings and Lord of lords* (Rev 19:16). It’s a promise.

And the only legitimate response is to bend the knee. Bow in humble submission. Following his lead and doing what he wants. If he says go, you go. If he says stay, you stay. If he says give, you give. If he says serve, you serve. If he says speak, you speak.

Who’s on the throne? You or him? I hope it’s him, because Jesus was *promised* to be a king, and he is.

Fifth, he was promised . . .

To reign forever (v33)

V33. *He will be great . . . [33] and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.*” The *house of Jacob* is another name for the house of Israel, the people of God. Comprised of God-fearing Jews and a few Gentiles in days of old. People who followed the Law and believed in the *promised* Messiah.

But now, the people of God consists of those who believe in the *realized* Messiah. Jew and Gentile alike. People who believe in Jesus. The one who *fulfilled* the promise. That’s the message of the *New Testament*. The message of Jesus.

And his reign over us will last *forever*. His kingdom will never end. It’s already started in the hearts and lives of those who follow him, and it’s never going to stop.

The question is, are you a part of it? Are you *part* of his rule and reign? Are you *part* of his eternal kingdom? If so, rest assured and live secure. With the utmost confidence that once you’re in, you’re in. Never to be lost or forsaken.

But if you’re not in, if you’re not a part of his kingdom, what are you waiting for? The gates are open. Life awaits. Jesus calls. Leave the darkness while you can.

Because Jesus was also promised . . .

To be our Savior (v31)

That’s the next one. Implied by the *name* designated for him. V31b – *You shall call his name Jesus*. A name that means “The LORD is salvation,” or “Yahweh saves.” Jesus means Savior.

It goes like this: **Jesus** is the English translation of the Greek **Iesous**, which translates the Hebrew **Yeshua**, or Joshua, which means **God saves**.

Jesus	→ → →	Iesous	→ → →	Yeshua	→ → →	God saves
(English)		(Greek)		(Hebrew)		(Meaning)

Put that all together, and Jesus was promised to be our Savior.

And you can be part of the fulfillment. He can be *your* Savior. And will, if you call on him. Whoever calls on the name of the Lord, whoever seeks his forgiveness, whoever wants his life, whoever desires his grace – will be saved. It’s a promise. A promise enabling you to enter his kingdom.

Because nothing is impossible with God (v37)

Jesus was promised in all these miraculous ways, because nothing is impossible with God.

V36. After saying *how* Mary would conceive, Gabriel said – [36] *And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren.* [We don't know what *kind* of relative Elizabeth was: cousin, aunt, great aunt. Only that there was a significant age disparity between her and Mary, and she too was miraculously pregnant.] [37] *For nothing [v37] will be impossible with God.*”

Not Elizabeth's pregnancy in old age, or Mary's pregnancy without a husband. Not the greatness of one born so lowly, or God himself born as a baby. Not a king who would reign forever, or a Savior who gives us life. *Nothing* is impossible with God.

Do you believe that? Do you believe that Jesus is all the things promised here? To the point of staking your eternity on him? Entrusting yourself to him? Surrendering every aspect of your life to him?

Mary did. Mary believed. Saying in v38 – “*Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.*” In other words, have your way with me, Lord. Have thine own way. I trust you. If it's going overseas, let it be to me accordingly. If it's going across the street, let it be to me accordingly. If it's speaking up, or standing up, or suffering, or anything else, *let be to me according to your word.*

There's nothing here that suggests we should pray to Mary, or venerate her, or seek her grace; but there's *certainly* an example here of how to respond to God's promises. An example of what it means to trust him. What it means to truly *believe* that nothing is impossible with God.

The question is, are you following it? Are you *following* her example? Do you believe like she did in the impossible promise of Jesus? If so, does it show? Do you lay down your life for him? Surrender all to him?

I hope so. Because we don't just have the *promise* of Jesus, we have the *person*. We have the fulfillment. We have the blessing himself. Proving beyond a shadow of doubt, that with God, the impossible really is possible. Promise kept.

Prayer – Lord, grab our attention and capture our gaze this Christmas. Challenge our thinking and encourage our hearts. Open our eyes to see you anew and believe your promise. The promise of Jesus. The promise of greatness. The promise of life. And the promise of impossible possibilities.

You Are Loved