

Luke 1:26-38: In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from 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. 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.³⁰ And 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 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.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.³⁷ For nothing will be impossible with God."³⁸ And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

Intro: God the Son coming into the world is the central fact of the entire history of the world.

- **Herman Bavinck:** Christ, the incarnate Word, is the central fact of the entire history of the world.

Today, we will hear from God's Word how this central fact of the entire history of the world happened!

- **John MacArthur:** the virgin conception of the God-Man Jesus Christ is the central truth of Christianity. On it the whole structure of Christian theology and the gospel is built. If Jesus had a human father, He was just a man. If He was just a man, there is no gospel, there is no Savior, there is no salvation and, in fact, the prophets and Jesus lied.

- **J. C. Ryle:** We have, in these verses, the announcement of the most marvelous event that ever happened in this world, - the incarnation and birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is a passage which we should always read with mingled wonder, love, and praise.

1. God

Luke 1:26: In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God

Christmas is about God. This day (and everyday!) is about God! Why was the angel Gabriel sent to Mary? God!

Oliver Allmand-Smith: The answer is God. Whatever the question, ultimately, in one way or another, and you may need to put a few words in between just to make clear how the answer is God. But ultimately, the answer is God! When you say, "Why me?" the answer is God! Because if you ask the question, "Why everything?" the answer is God. Because if you ask the most foundational question of all, "Why anything?" the answer is God.

So why Christmas? God! Why is Gabriel speaking to Mary in this passage? God! What are you here for? God!

John 3:16; GOSPEL!

2. The Angel

Luke 1:26: In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God

Daniel 9:20-26: While I was speaking & praying, confessing my sin & the sin of my people Israel, & presenting my plea before the LORD my God for the holy hill of my God,²¹ while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the first, came to me in swift flight at the time of the evening sacrifice.²² He made me understand, speaking with me & saying, "O Daniel, I have now come out to give you insight & understanding.²³ At the beginning of your pleas for mercy a word went out, & I have come to tell it to you, for **you are greatly loved**. Therefore consider the word & understand the vision.²⁴ "Seventy weeks are decreed about your people & your holy city, to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, & to **atone for iniquity**, to **bring in everlasting righteousness**, to seal both vision & prophet, & to anoint a most holy place.²⁵ Know therefore & understand that from the going out of the word to restore & build Jerusalem to the coming of **an anointed one, a prince**, there shall be seven weeks. Then for sixty-two weeks it shall be built again with squares & moat, but in a troubled time.

²⁶ And after the sixty-two weeks, **an anointed one shall be cut off & shall have nothing**.

3. The Place

Luke 1:26: In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth

Nazareth was a small, unknown town – it's never mentioned in the Old Testament. (My hometown illustration)

John MacArthur: Nazareth was not on any of the major trade routes; all the important roads bypassed it. It was well off the beaten path, far from the important centers of Jewish culture and religion. Moreover, Galilee, where Nazareth was located, was known as "Galilee of the Gentiles" (Isa. 9:1; Matt. 4:15) because of its proximity to Gentile regions. God's choice of Nazareth to be Jesus' birthplace reveals that He is the Savior of the world, not of the powerful and elite of one nation only, but of all "those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks."

John 1:46: Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come & see."
John 7:41-42, 52: Others said, "This is the Christ." But some said, "Is the Christ to come from Galilee? Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the offspring of David, and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David was?" . . . ⁵² They replied, "Are you from Galilee too? Search and see that no prophet arises from Galilee."
Matthew 2:23: And he went and lived in a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled: "He shall be called a Nazarene."

D. A. Carson: He is not saying that a particular OT prophet foretold that the Messiah would live in Nazareth; he is saying that the OT prophets foretold that the Messiah would be despised

Jesus was born in the place animals are kept!
He was laid in the feeding trough of a cow or sheep!
Immediately after his birth, men were trying to kill him as a baby!
He had to flee from his home country to Egypt and live as an exile!
And even when He came back home, He was forced to grow up in Nazareth to bear the hatred and ridicule of sinners! They accused Him of being born by fornication!
He rode into Jerusalem on a borrowed donkey!
He was buried in a borrowed tomb!
He did all of this for you and me – and for the glory of His Father!

2 Corinthians 8:9: For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.

Hymn: Thou who wast rich beyond all splendour, All for love's sake becomest poor;
Thrones for a manger didst surrender, Sapphire-paved courts for stable floor.
Thou who wast rich beyond all splendour, All for love's sake becomes poor.

Thou who art God beyond all praising, All for love's sake becomest man;
Stooping so low, but sinners raising Heavenwards by thine eternal plan.
Thou who art God beyond all praising, All for love's sake becomest man.

Thou who art love beyond all telling, Saviour and King, we worship thee.
Emmanuel, within us dwelling, Make us what thou wouldst have us be.
Thou who art love beyond all telling, Saviour and King, we worship thee.

4. The Virgin

Luke 1:26-27: In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from 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. And the **virgin's** name was Mary.

Like Nazareth was unknown, Mary was a small, unknown person! Lowly, humble, but faithful! She was a virgin!

“Virgin” is mentioned twice! Matthew 1:23: "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us).

- 1) The virgin birth/conception shows us that God always keeps all of His promises!
- 2) The virgin birth shows us that God is all powerful and works miracles!
- 3) The virgin birth reminds us that Jesus had to be truly man to obey the law of God perfectly & to die for our sins!
- 4) The virgin birth reminds us that Jesus had to be truly God to bear the infinite punishment we deserve!
- 5) The virgin birth reminds us that salvation is wholly of the LORD!

Ligon Duncan: Kent Hughes says, “Mary was a nobody from a nothing town in the middle of nowhere.” Do you see the amazing, loving condescension of God in this? Think about it for a moment, parents. Parents, out of love, want the best for their children. They want to clothe their children in a way that the children won't be embarrassed. They want their children to go to the best schools. They want their children to be raised in a safe and secure and a warm and loving environment. They want to give their children the best. Now I want you to pause and contemplate this, my friends: your heavenly Father for your salvation gave your Savior less by way of earthly privileges than any of you have given to your children. This is the humble condition into which the Lord Jesus Christ was born. I do not say this so that you will feel guilty because of the bounty that God has given you; we ought to give God praise. But I do say this so that we will appreciate the humiliation of the Lord Jesus Christ. From before His birth it was appointed that He would be born to this obscure maiden from an obscure city, in an obscure region, into a relatively poor family, for your salvation...because of His amazing, loving condescension in His redeeming work.

5. The Husband To Be

Luke 1:26-27: In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from 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.

Mary was betrothed to Joseph: they were considered husband and wife; yet they didn't live together or consummate the marriage; more binding than our engagements; only death or divorce ended it; lasted about a year. Joseph was of the house of David! Jesus' legal, earthly father was Joseph, who was of the house of David!

Jesus is the great Son of David Who would reign forever: 2 Samuel 7:12-13: When your days are fulfilled & you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, & I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.

6. The Greeting

Luke 1:28: And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!"

a. This does not mean that Mary was sinless: The immaculate conception is false teaching!

Luke 1:47: my spirit rejoices in God my Savior; She was not full of grace: **Acts 6:8:** Stephen, full of grace

b. She was a faithful believer in the LORD: Ephesians 1:5-6: he predestined us for adoption through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has **blessed** us in the Beloved.

c. She is very highly favored: Luke 1:48: For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed

d. Jesus says we can all be even more blessed than Mary: Luke 11:27-28: “Blessed is the womb that bore you, & the breasts at which you nursed!” But he said, “Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God & keep it!”

Philip Ryken: As blessed as it was for Mary to nurse Jesus as her breast, it is even more blessed to hear and to do the word of God . . . As Augustine said . . . “Mary was more blessed in accepting the faith of Christ than in conceiving the flesh of Christ.”

e. **All the high favor and grace Mary had was a gift from God (7 “He has’s!”): Luke 1:46-55:** And Mary said, "My soul **magnifies the Lord**,⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices **in God my Savior**,⁴⁸ for **he has** looked on the humble estate of his servant. For behold, from now on 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 for those who fear him from generation to generation.⁵¹ **He has** shown strength with his arm; **he has** scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts;⁵² **he has** brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate;⁵³ **he has** filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent empty away.⁵⁴ **He has** helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy,⁵⁵ as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever."

7. The Fear

Luke 1:29: But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be.

When angels appear to people in the Bible, the people they appear to get scared! They get troubled! They are afraid
Luke 1:12: Zechariah was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him.

8. The Annunciation

Luke 1:30-33: And 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 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."

a. **The assurance of God’s favor: Verse 30:** Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.

Mary walked with God! **Genesis 6:8-9:** But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.⁹ These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation. Noah walked with God.

Job 1:1: There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job, and that man was blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil.

b. **Verse 31: you will conceive in your womb & bear a son, & you shall call his name Jesus:** The LORD saves!

1) **Jesus saves us from the penalty of sin: Isaiah 53:4, 10:** we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted . . . it was the will of the LORD to crush him – He saves us from hell!

2) **Jesus saves us from the power of sin: Romans 6:2:** How can we who died to sin still live in it?
Hymn: He breaks the power of canceled sin

3) **Jesus saves us from the pursuit and pleasure of sin: Psalm 97:10:** O you who love the LORD, hate evil!

Psalm 16:11: in Your presence there is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

4) **Jesus will finally save us from the presence of sin: Revelation 21:4:** He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.

Would you trust in Jesus today?! John 3:16; John 14:6; Romans 4:5

c. **He will be great: 1) Great in His Person: Isaiah 9:6:** For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called² Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (Great power; Great wisdom; Great grace; Great mercy; Great everything!)

Charles Spurgeon: Is He not rightly called Wonderful? Infinite, and an infant; Eternal, and yet born of a woman; Almighty, and yet hanging on a woman's breast; Supporting the universe, and yet needing to be carried in a mother's arms; King of angels, and yet the reputed son of Joseph; Heir of all things, and yet the carpenter's despised son; Wonderful art Thou, O Jesus, and that shall be Thy name forever.

2) Great in His Work: Great preaching; Great miracles; Great life; Great death; Great resurrection! Great rule!

3) Great in His Love: No man ever loved like Jesus! It's a love that surpasses knowledge! Paul prays in Eph. 3!

Hymn: Oh the deep, deep love of Jesus; Vast unmeasured, boundless, free

Rolling as a mighty ocean in its fullness over me; Underneath me, all around me, is the current Of His love
Leading onward, leading homeward to Thy glorious rest above

d. He will be called Son of the Most High: Most High is another name for God! Jesus is the Son of God!

e. The Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David: Jesus is the promised Messiah in David's line

f. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end: Jesus is the King of Israel, and He will reign forever and ever! Jesus is King of kinds and LORD of lords!

8. The Question

Luke 1:34: And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?"

She simply wants to know how this will happen. This is not a question of unbelief but of how.

10. The Answer

Luke 1:35-37: 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.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.³⁷ For nothing will be impossible with God."

a. Verse 35: The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you:

Philip Ryken: This language echoes the Old Testament and reminds us that the Holy Spirit has been actively involved in everything that God has ever done. The Spirit was present at creation, when he overshadowed the waters of the earth (Gen. 1:2). The Spirit was there at the exodus, when he overshadowed the tabernacle in a cloud of glory (Ex. 40:34-35). Later the Spirit would overshadow Jesus, anointing him for his earthly ministry. It was by the Spirit that Jesus made atonement for our sins (Heb. 9:14), and by the Spirit that he was raised from the dead (Rom. 1:4). Then Jesus sent the Spirit to overshadow the church (Acts 1:8); it is by the power of his presence that serve Christ today. The Holy Spirit has been overshadowing God's people from the very beginning, working with the Father and the Son for our salvation. But not work of the Spirit is more miraculous than the work he did in Mary's womb, enabling the virgin to give birth to the Son of God.

b. The child will be called holy – the Son of God: Jesus is holy: He is sinless; He is perfect; He is set apart; There is no one like Him! **S. M. Lockridge:** He's the greatest phenomenon that has ever crossed the horizon of this world! He's God's Son! He's the sinner's Savior! He's the centerpiece of civilization!

Jesus is God's Son: Athanasian Creed: The Son was neither made nor created; he was begotten from the Father alone . . . He is God from the essence of the Father, begotten before time; and he is human from the essence of his mother, born in time; completely God, completely human, with a rational soul and human flesh; equal to the Father as regards divinity, less than the Father as regards humanity.

Writer: The incarnation took all that properly belongs to our humanity and delivered it back to us, redeemed. All

of our inclinations and appetites and capacities and yearnings are purified and gathered up and glorified by Christ. He did not come to thin out human life; He came to set it free. All the dancing and feasting and processing and singing and building and sculpting and baking and merrymaking that belong to us, and that were stolen away into the service of false gods, are returned to us in the gospel.

c. Elizabeth, who is old and was barren, has also conceived a son: Listen Mary, Elizabeth, who is old and barren has conceived a son! God has already one a miracle in her! God can do something even greater in you!

d. Nothing will be impossible with God: Beloved, God is the God of the virgin birth! He's the God of creation! He's the God of the Exodus! He's the God of the slaughter of 185,000 Assyrians in one night! He's the God of the resurrection! He's the God of the virgin birth! He's the God of the impossible!

Philip Ryken: Mary's relative Elizabeth - barren old Elizabeth - was six months pregnant! The angel told Mary this to prove the power of God, which he declared in a memorable phrase: "Nothing will be impossible with God" (Luke 1:37; cf. Gen. 18:14). God was able to bring a child from a barren womb. If he was able to do this, then by the power of his Holy Spirit he could just as well make a virgin conceive and bear a son. And if God could perform the miracle of the virgin birth, then he is quite capable of handling the difficulties of our daily lives. Nothing is impossible with God. This is a verse to live by. As J. C. Ryle has said, "A hearty reception of this great principle is of immense importance to our own inward peace." Is there anything in your life that seems impossible? Perhaps it seems impossible for your great sin to be forgiven, especially after all the times you have tried not to do it again, but failed. Perhaps it seems impossible for your family to be restored after all the heartbreak and for joy to come again. Maybe it seems impossible for your physical and financial needs to be met, or for your work, your studies, or your ministry to succeed. It may seem impossible to endure the suffering that has come into your life, or for someone you love to come to Christ. But the Bible says, "Nothing will be impossible with God." He is the God of the virgin birth! There is no sin he cannot forgive, no relationship he cannot reconcile, no problem he cannot resolve, no need he cannot meet, no ministry he cannot bless, no grief he cannot comfort, no life he cannot reclaim, no sinner he cannot save. The God of the virgin birth is the God who makes all things possible.

11. The Acceptance

Luke 1:38: And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

This is how faithful followers of the LORD respond: no matter the cost; no matter the loss; no matter how hard this might be – whatever You say LORD; whatever You want LORD; I am Your slave: I will follow, trust, & obey You!

Abraham: Hebrews 11:8: By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. (Offered up his own son Isaac!)

Isa. 6:8: Here am I! Send me; **Esther 4:16:** if I perish, I perish; **Job 13:15:** Though he slay me, I will hope in Him

R. T. France: Gladys Aylward (1902-1970), [was] a woman who got herself to China after having been turned down by a missionary society. Born in London to a working-class family, Aylward worked as a maid, studying on her own to prepare for overseas missionary service. Seeing her education as inadequate, the mission that she applied to rejected her, contending that she could not learn to speak Chinese. Undeterred, Aylward spent her life savings to get to China, a journey filled with dangers, including a trip across Siberia. Aylward in time became a larger-than-life figure among the Chinese, advocating for prison reform, caring for and adopting orphans, and fighting against the terrible practice of foot-binding, not to mention spreading the good news of the gospel. [She also led] almost one hundred orphans across the mountains to safety when the Japanese invaded . . .

Philip Ryken: This was a great honor – the greatest honor that any woman has even been given. To this day, Mary is blessed as the mother of Jesus. But her service also led to great suffering. To accept the virgin birth, Mary had to be willing to give up almost everything she knew and loved. She had to be willing to give up Joseph, the man she

was engaged to marry. How could he consent to take her as his wife if she was pregnant with a child that was not his own? She had to be willing to give up her reputation. Imagine the village gossip in a town like Nazareth, where everyone would wonder who the father was. To be frank, there would always be some people who would call her son a [child conceived from sexual immorality]. Some might even say that she deserved to die, because the law demanded the death penalty whenever a woman who was engaged was convicted of adultery (Deut. 22:23-24). There were other trials as well. There were all the physical pains that went with pregnancy and childbirth. There were also many hardships that Mary could not have predicted: the journey to Bethlehem, the exile in Egypt, the hatred of Herod. But the greatest suffering came when Jesus grew to be a man and began to fulfill his ministry. There was so much controversy surrounding Jesus that at one point the family tried to get him to go to another part of the country, or even to leave the ministry altogether (Mark 3:21). It was obvious that he was on a collision course with death. And at the very end Mary had to endure his arrest, his trial, his crucifixion, and his bloody burial. This is what it meant for Mary to submit to God's will for her life. When she said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word" (Luke 1:38), she was consenting to a lifetime of suffering for the glory of God . . . This is what it means to be a Christian. Indeed, we might even say that Mary was the first Christian, for a Christian is simply a person who believes in Jesus and says, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." This means trusting God for our relationships – romantic and otherwise – not trying to make them go the way we want them to go, but letting God lead. It means trusting God in our daily work, allowing him to see to our success. It means trusting God for ministry, being content with whatever blessing he brings, or doesn't bring, as long as we are faithful. It means trusting God for our families, asking him to carry our burden for the people we love. It means trusting God with our troubles – the impossible things we have to face. And it means trusting God when we suffer reproach, as Mary did. If we follow God, then people will be as opposed to us as they are to him, but by faith we will continue to follow him. Are you willing to be God's servant? Then surrender to his will and submit to his word. Give up control, putting things into his hands rather than bending them to your own purpose. Live for God no matter what other people think. And do this even if it means suffering for the cause of Christ. By the grace of God, through faith in Christ and by the work of the Holy Spirit, we are able to say what Mary said: "Have it your way, Lord, not mine – I am ready to do your will."

Mary is not the greatest example of this. Her Son, Jesus is – remember His prayer in Gethsemane – "Not My will, but Your will be done!" Jesus went to the cross and died and rose again so that we might be forgiven for all of our failures to do God's will and so that we can start doing the will of God by His grace and for His glory!

Christ Jesus Came Through The Incarnation
Mary Humbly Accepted The Great Annunciation
The Virgin Believed God's Word Declaration
She's The Favored One Who Needed Salvation
Through Jesus Her Son There's No Condemnation
The Holy Spirit Overshadowed To Cause The Formation
Of Christ In The Womb Of His Own Creation
He's Great, The God-Man Who Deserves Adoration
He's Son Of The Most High And LORD Of Every Nation
He'll Rule On The Throne Of David Without Cessation
His Kingdom Has No End For Eternal Duration
He's Holy Son Of God, We Bow In Prostration
For He Died On That Cross As Our Propitiation
Then Rose From The Dead For Our Justification
By Faith Alone We're Saved From Damnation
His Spirit Works In Us For Sanctification
And He'll Lead Us Home To Glorification
Where He'll Be Our Preoccupation, Infatuation
And Holy Fascination, For He Causes Intoxication
More Than Anything Else In All Of Creation!