

*an series
all from Luke*

AN ANGEL'S MISSION TO NAZARETH
Luke 1:26-38

Intro: As I announced last Sunday, I am beginning this morning a study of the life of Christ--to be based upon the Gospel according to Mark.

But since Mark does not write about the events surrounding the birth and early life of our Lord upon earth, I am spending three Sundays in the Gospel according to Luke, chapters 1 and 2.

Therefore, we will be in Luke during the remaining Sundays of this month; on the first Sunday of January we will start with the Gospel of Mark.

Please read Luke 1, 2, and the Gospel of Mark as often as you can. Pray that the Lord will give you a heart that is open to the teaching ministry of the Spirit of God. Let us expect a great time of blessing in the weeks ahead as we concentrate upon the incarnate life of the Son of God.

If you care to, and if the Lord so leads, let your friends know about this study. Others may want to join us for these studies.

This morning we want to look at the passage in Luke's Gospel where we learn how the virgin Mary found out that she was to give birth to the Son of God. The account is found only in Luke.

(Remind the people of the reason for the writing of this Gospel. Cf. Luke 1:1-4.)

I. THE ANGELIC MESSENGER: GABRIEL.

His name appears only 4 times in the Word of God: twice in the OT; twice in the NT. In the OT twice in the same book: Dan. 8:16; 9:21; in the NT--only in Luke (1:19, 26).

In all four passages, however, Gabriel is concerned with just one thing: the revelation of some message from God to man. Only three people are involved: Daniel, Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, and the virgin Mary.

Notice the expression, "And in the sixth month," i.e., since Elisabeth had conceived, the angel, Gabriel, was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, To a virgin . . . and the virgin's name was Mary."

Gabriel was told where God wanted him to go. Gabriel was told who he was to see. And Gabriel was given the message which God wanted Mary to have.

Let us look for a moment at the place.

II. "A CITY OF GALILEE, NAMED NAZARETH."

It appears that those for whom Luke is writing would not be familiar with Nazareth or its location.

Nazareth was a city despised by the Jews because:

- 1) Many Gentiles lived there.
- 2) Pagan temples were there.

In addition, it was located on the route between Tyre and Sidon on the coast, and Jerusalem. Roman soldiers, Greek merchants, and travelers of various nationalities were constantly going through Nazareth. Therefore, it was a very WICKED CITY!

It was for this reason that Nathanael in John 1:46 said, when informed by Philip that they had found the Messiah, and that he was "Jesus of Nazareth," "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?"

So the scene suddenly changes in Luke 1 from Gabriel's appearance to Zacharias in Jerusalem to his appearance to Mary in NAZARETH.

III. THE VIRGIN MARY.

We need to read very carefully what the Word says about the virgin Mary because it seems that men are inclined to say too much about her, or not enough!

"HIGHLY
FAVORED" =
ENDUED WITH
GRACE.
CF. ALSO
LUKE 1:47

There is nothing in the Bible about the immaculate conception of Mary. Therefore, the Bible does not teach that Mary was sinless.

There is nothing in the Bible about the bodily ascension of Mary into heaven.

SOMETIMES IT IS JUST AS IMPORTANT TO NOTICE WHAT THE BIBLE DOES NOT TEACH AS IT IS TO NOTICE WHAT IT DOES TEACH!

But, on the other side, apart from our Lord Himself, there probably has never been a more wonderful person than Mary of Nazareth.

Think of this kind of a girl growing up in a city like Nazareth! She was morally pure. Her Magnificat later on in the chapter shows that her mind and heart were filled with the Word of God.

She was a member of the royal family in Israel, but she lived

in the lowliest of circumstances.

She was engaged to a man named, Joseph. Engagements lasted 1 year in those days, and were practically as binding as marriages.

What this announcement was to mean with respect to her plans for marriage, or what it would mean to her reputation in a city like Nazareth, she could not know. She obviously is responsive because of the harmony between the angel's message and the OT Scriptures. AT THE END OF OUR PASSAGE WE SEE HOW COMPLETELY SHE WAS WILLING TO GIVE HERSELF TO THE LORD FOR THIS, AND THE LANGUAGE THAT SHE USES INDICATES THAT SHE WAS GOING TO LEAVE THE TIME OF THIS EVENT COMPLETELY IN THE LORD'S HANDS.

But now I want to make a very important point.

It is very interesting to study Bible geography and history--so we can know as much about Nazareth as possible.

It is very interesting to study angels. In fact, the Bible is our only reliable source of information about angels.

It is also very interesting to study people in the Bible--the people who are mentioned. This would be especially true in the case of the virgin Mary.

BUT, IN READING THE OT OR THE NT, WE MUST NEVER FORGET THAT THERE IS ONE PERSON WHO STANDS PREEMINENTLY ABOVE ALL OTHERS, ONE BEFORE WHOM ALL OTHERS FADE INTO INSIGNIFICANCE. I SPEAK OF NONE OTHER THAN GOD'S ETERNAL SON, OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF THIS ACCOUNT THIS MORNING IS NOT GABRIEL, IS NOT THE VIRGIN MARY, IS NOT NAZARETH, BUT IT IS JESUS OF NAZARETH!

IV. "JESUS."

Three things stand out about Jesus in the message which Gabriel conveys to the virgin Mary:

- A. Her baby would be truly human and yet absolute Deity. "Son of the Highest" and "Son of God" indicate complete equality with God as it applies to His nature, and indicates that the incarnation of our Lord did not change His Deity in any way!

He "shall be called" (vv. 32, 35) are words which tell us the recognition that our Lord was to receive from men. Not only would He claim this, but men will universally recognize that this claim is true.

- B. Her baby would have a twofold mission in the world:
1. He would be a Savior. This is indicated in His Name, "Jesus."
 2. He would be a King upon "the throne of his father, David." His Kingdom, once established, would never end.

Mary would have to put a literal interpretation on both of these.

The fact that only the first of these has been fulfilled has caused some people a great deal of difficulty. But the answer is to be found in the third truth we have in the angel's message--implied, to be sure, but confirmed by the remainder of the NT. It is this:

- C. Her baby would be born in the greatest humiliation, and die the same way, BUT HE WOULD COME A SECOND TIME TO REIGN OVER ALL OF THE EARTH.

Concl: There obviously is a great difference between Zacharias' question in v. 18 as compared with Mary's in v. 34. Mary was asking for greater light. She had already believed the message, but she wanted to know "how."

Notice the simple, clear answer given by the angel. The announcement might be given by an angel, but the birth could only be possible through the Holy Spirit.

Mary does not inquire beyond what the angel says--and neither should we! She is completely responsive to the will of God, leaving all of the consequences with the Lord.

What practical help can we derive from a passage like this? It will strengthen our faith in:

- 1) His faithfulness to His Word.
- 2) His grace.
- 3) His power: With God no word shall be impossible.