

*in series
taken from Luke*

THE ANNUNCIATION
Luke 1:26-38

Introduction: An annunciation is an announcement, or the act of announcing.

Historically it has to do with this passage of Scripture in which we have the angelic announcement of the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ!

It is a true account of an actual event in history.

It is a complete account. All that God intends for us to know about this amazing, miraculous event, is given here. Not a word is wasted. We are concerned here not only with what was going to happen, but how it would be possible. There is nothing about the virgin birth of Christ given anywhere else in the Bible which can add to the basic facts that are given here. To try to go beyond this is both irreverent and fruitless. This is what God wants us to know, and it is all that we need to know.

There are actually four divisions in this passage:

- 1) An appearance (vv. 26-29). It "troubled" her. She was "upset and
- 2) An announcement (vv. 30-33). "puzzled" (Robertson, II, 13). Different
- 3) An answer (vv. 34-37). reasons came to her mind. ("troubled" only here in the NT.)
- 4) An approval (v. 38). Or, an acceptance, an agreement.

(Read it pointing out these divisions.)

Instead of following these divisions in a strict way, I want to take four great themes from this passage which basically do follow the divisions. They are:

- I. THE GRACE OF GOD TO MARY.
- II. THE HUMILIATION AND GLORY OF THE LORD JESUS.
- III. THE MIRACLE OF THE VIRGIN BIRTH.
- IV. MARY'S FAITH.

I. THE GRACE OF GOD TO MARY.

Although Mary must have been a wonderful person, yet there is nothing anywhere in Scripture to indicate that she was Deity, or that she was ever worshipped, or that anyone ever prayed to her.

Instead -- we have just the opposite!

Anyone who tries to deify the virgin Mary has not read the Bible carefully -- they have not noticed two very important statements made by the angel Gabriel in this passage:

- 1) In v. 28, "Hail, thou that art highly favoured . . ."
- 2) In v. 30, "Fear not, Mary: for thou has found favour with God.

If you could see these words in the Greek NT you would see that the root of both expressions is the word, GRACE!

Gabriel makes it very clear that God's plan for Mary to become the human mother of the Lord Jesus Christ is a plan that is based entirely upon GRACE -- the grace of God!

Mary was not chosen because she was Mary (as wonderful a person as she may have been). While Gabriel is honoring her, he is not worshipping her. The word grace indicates that the reason for the choice of Mary lies within the heart of God Himself, and not in the character nor in the achievements of the virgin Mary!

The point: It has to be the same for us. If God could only deal with Mary in grace, it could not be otherwise for any of us.

Cf. Eph. 2:8, 9.

But now look at the great contrast between Mary and her Son as we look for a few minutes at:

II. THE HUMILIATION AND GLORY OF THE LORD JESUS.

Notice where the angel was sent -- "unto a city of Galilee named Nazareth."

Do you remember what Nathanael said to Philip when Philip came to tell him about "Jesus of Nazareth" (John 1:45)? He said, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?"

Not only was the Lord Jesus Christ facing humiliation by becoming a man, but why should the announcement have been made in Nazareth? Why not at least in Jerusalem?

It was all a part of His humiliation.

And who were Joseph and Mary? Really nobodies! They were both descendants of David, but that meant nothing for them socially. They were evidently quite poor.

This, too, was a part of His humiliation.

But -- to think of Him becoming a man, a human being! Who can comprehend this! The Lord of glory in human flesh, born as a baby, dependent, needing to grow and to learn! This is a mystery beyond all mysteries!

HOWEVER, NOTICE THE CONTRAST BETWEEN VERSES 32 AND 33 WHEN COMPARED WITH VERSE 31.

Note: "He shall be great . . ."

And He was -- greater than angels,
 greater than Abraham,
 greater than Moses,
 greater than Joshua,
 greater than David,
 great in His birth,
 great in His life,
 great in His works,
 great in His teaching,
 great in His death,
 great in His resurrection,
 great in His ascension,
 great in His power to save,
 great in His mediatorial power as our great
 High Priest,
 to be the greatest of all kings and lords --
 King of kings and Lord of lords,
 great in His Person -- "the Son of the highest
 . . . holy . . . the Son of God."

Who can compare with Him?

No one has ever or will ever experience greater humiliation,
 and no one will ever achieve greater glory.

He "greatly to be praised" (Psa. 96:4).

Let us pray that the Lord will enable us to see His great-
 ness!

IS HE "GREAT" TO YOU?

This contrast in the angel Gabriel's announcement between
 the humiliation of Christ and the glory of Christ is the
 same that Paul has given to us in Phil. 2:5-11.

There are many lessons for us to learn from the humiliation
 of Christ in His birth and in His death -- but one of the
 greatest of these surely is the lesson that it gives to us
 in humility -- "Let this mind be in you which was also in
 Christ Jesus . . .!"

Pride is at the source of all of our problems. And this is
 where we need to follow His example, as Peter so forcibly
 tells us in 1 Peter 2:21-23.

But let us go on to . . .

III. THE MIRACLE OF THE VIRGIN BIRTH.

There are really two major miracles which are emphasized in
 v. 35:

- 1) The first is that the Son of God could become a man, a human being!
- 2) The second is that the Son of God could continue to be the Son of God in every sense of the word after He became a man!

And yet both miracles took place!

(See the marginal reading of v. 35b. Also "the Son of the Highest" in v. 32 -- after His birth, equal with God in His Person.)

How could this be?

By the Holy Spirit, and by "the power of the Highest."

Here also is a truth with great practical value for us. Bishop Ryle says,

" . . . among many antidotes to a doubting, anxious, questioning state of mind, few will be found more useful than that before us now, -- a thorough conviction of the almighty power of God" (Luke, p. 28).

It is the power of God and the ministry of the Holy Spirit which gives us hope every day that we live. Bishop Ryle goes on to say about the power of God . . .

"There is no sin too black and bad to be pardoned.

"There is no heart too hard and wicked to be changed.

"There is no work too hard for a believer to do.

"There is no trial too hard to be borne.

"There is no promise too great to be fulfilled.

"There is no difficulty too great for a believer to overcome" (Op. cit., pp. 28, 29).

The birth of Jesus Christ really introduces the ministry of the Spirit -- the special blessing conferred upon all believers in this present age!

Finally,

IV. MARY'S FAITH.

Do you think that the salvation of men, the fulfillment of God's eternal plan of salvation, was in the balance while the Lord was waiting for Mary to accept or reject the message of Gabriel.

If you do, you have a very low understanding of the mighty power of God. It was important that she accept, that she believe, but that was just as certain as everything else connected with the announcement which was given to her.

Cf. Acts 13:48b, " . . . and as many as were ordained to

eternal life believed."

Faith itself comes from God -- through the Word!

How did it come to Mary?

- 1) By direct revelation from God through Gabriel -- and Gabriel believed it too (which would have made an impression on Mary).
- 2) By the recent miracle performed with Elisabeth (v. 36). Probably every miraculous birth in the OT was to prepare the hearts of the people of Israel for this greatest of all births, the most miraculous of all -- the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ!
- 3) From the very character of God. See v. 37 -- an adaptation from Gen. 18:14a, "Is anything too hard for the Lord?"

Note the marginal reading on Luke 1:37.
She did not ask for anything more - such as a sign!

Note what Elisabeth said in Luke 1:45.

The Lord is always working to bring us to faith -- and He will do it just as certainly as He did it for Mary.
Remember Heb. 11:6.

Are you having trouble here?

Mary's faith should be a great encouragement for yours. For her to believe the promises given to her is a much greater thing than for us to believe any promise which He has given to us in the Word.

And, what is also important, Godet points out that Mary's words, "be it unto me," are not in the present, which would have meant, do it now, but in the aorist which indicated that she was leaving the time up to the Lord!

Concl: Thus, from The Annunciation, the announcement of all announcements, I leave you with these four words:

- 1) GRACE.
- 2) HUMILITY.
- 3) POWER.
- 4) FAITH.

Get these words in your heart and you have the major lessons which the Lord seems to have been teaching Mary -- AND US!!!