

THE VIRGIN-BORN SON OF GOD

Luke 1:26-38

Intro: With the approach of the Christmas season, I felt constrained to bring a series of messages having to do with the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. Bishop J. C. Ryle who ministered in the Church of England during the nineteenth century, and whose books continue to be published, was a strong evangelical. Like so many of the Church of England men in his day, he loved the Lord Jesus, and he loved the Word of God. He died in 1900, but he continues to minister through his writings. He wrote a set of books on the four Gospels called, *Expository Thoughts on the Gospels*. In that set he made the following comment in connection with the verses I have chosen as my text for this morning. He said this:

We have in these verses the announcement of the most marvelous event that ever happened in the 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 (*Luke, Vol. I, p. 21*).

There never was a birth like it, and there will never be another that can even begin to compare with it. It was the event which the writers of the OT looked forward to, and it is the event which is explained in great detail in the NT. It is so amazing, in fact, that many religious leaders in our Lord's day intensely despised and rejected our Lord's claims as to Who He was, and why He had come into the world. It was our Lord's unique birth that made possible the work that He came to earth to do, as well as the work that He continues to do in heaven. To deny the Biblical account of our Lord's birth, is to deny His teaching and to deny the purpose of His death and His resurrection. And so it is very important that we all understand the special nature of our Lord's birth as the fundamental foundation of all that He taught, the miracles He performed, and the death that He died.

The historical account of our Lord's birth is given primarily in two of the four Gospels: the Gospel of Matthew, and the Gospel of Luke. In our text for today we learn how Mary was told that she was to give birth to the Son of God. Let's be patient with those who find this account very difficult to believe because we would be in the same position as they are if it were not that the Lord has by His Spirit opened our eyes and hearts to understand the truth concerning the Baby Whom Mary had. Let us go through the text to make sure that we basically understand the message that Dr. Luke has given to us in these verses.

I. A SURVEY OF LUKE 1:26-38.

“The sixth month” mentioned in verse 26 means “the sixth month” since Elisabeth knew that she was going to have a baby. In three more months she would give birth to a baby boy who was named John, and who later was known as John the Baptist. From this we know that John the Baptist was six months older than the Lord Jesus.

After giving us that detail, then Luke mentioned that God sent the angel Gabriel to a city in Galilee named Nazareth. It was a very notorious city. Several years later when the Lord had reached manhood, and was beginning his public ministry, Philip went to find Nathanael (who they were isn't important for the moment). Philip spoke to Nathanael about “Jesus of Nazareth” about Whom Philip was convinced that Moses had written. This means that Philip believed that “Jesus of Nazareth” was the Messiah. Nathanael was skeptical at first, and responded to Philip by saying, “Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?” (John 1:46). It seemed unthinkable that the Messiah would come from Nazareth. Our Lord was born in Bethlehem, but he was raised in Nazareth. It shows that even from the beginning of our Lord's life on earth, humiliation was involved.

But not only was the town in which he was raised a part of our Lord's humiliation, but the same thing must be said about His mother. Who was Mary? We learn from the Gospels that Mary was a very common name among women in those days. She became very important as a result of being the mother of our Lord, but actually she was a nobody!

She was a virgin. This meant that she was not married. But she was engaged to a man by the name of Joseph. He was a member of the royal family of Israel, but even that meant nothing in those days when the Jews were dominated by Rome.

But this Mary who was insignificant as far as the world was concerned, had been chosen for a very important work in the plan and purpose of God. In verse 28 we read that the angel told her that she was “highly favored, and that the Lord was with her. The statement, “blessed art thou among women” is not in the best MSS.

Obviously Mary was not expecting a visit from the angel Gabriel, nor did she understand his first words to her. But the angel told her not to be afraid because she had found favor with God. And then he gave her the

message that God had sent Gabriel to give to her.

She was going to have a baby, a son, and she was to name Him Jesus. That was startling enough. But then Gabriel went on to speak to Mary the words that we find in verses 32 and 33.

Her Son would be “great,” meaning very important, very powerful. He would actually be Deity, “the Son of the Highest,” but as Mary’s Son He would also be related to David, King David. So this would mean that He would come as the King of the Jewish people, would occupy David’s throne, and reign over the house of Jacob forever. Of His kingdom there would be no end.

Now how could Mary get anyone to believe what the angel Gabriel was saying?. Or what could possibly make a lowly, insignificant Jewish girl believe that she would have such a glorious Son? How much of this was she able to take in?

It all had to sound unbelievably good to her, but she had one major problem: she was not married. Mary was very moral. She would never think of having a child out of wedlock. And so at this point she was really confused. But that confusion was not going to last very long. Note Gabriel’s words in verses 35 and 36.

She was given a message that no woman, young or old, had ever received before. Although she was not married, the Holy Spirit would come upon her, and the power of the Highest (evidently a reference to God, the Father) would overshadow her, so that the child that she would bear would be called “the Son of God.” This would mean that her Son would be not only human, but He would also be God. This was what the Jews believed, that to claim that God was your Father, was to make yourself equal with God. See John 5:17-18.

The angel reminded her about Elisabeth. She had not been able to have children during her childbearing years, but at that very time she was pregnant with a child who was conceived after she and her husband were naturally too old to have a child. But God had set aside the usual pattern, as He had done before, and in just three more months Elisabeth’s son was going to be born. How and why? “For with God nothing shall be impossible.” Or a better translation would be, “for no word from God shall be without power.”

Gabriel had been sent to Mary with a message from God. God not only stands behind His Word, and does what He says He will do, but His Word carries with it not only the power of fulfillment, but the power to convince those who hear the Word of God that it is true, but also enable them to believe it.

And so, as fantastic as the Lord's words through the angel Gabriel to Mary were, she accepted the Word without a single further question, and without delay! See her words in verse 38.

A thoughtful reader of these verses cannot help but ask, "How could Mary so readily agree to that amazing words of the angel Gabriel?" Well, I believe that that question has been at least partially answered for us. When the Lord uses His Word in the heart of anyone, there is always with that Word a power accompanying it to convince of its truth, and to enable the one who hears to believe. Obviously there are many times when the Word is given, and no one believes. But that is never the case when the Word is given by the power of God. So we do not congratulate Mary because of her faith. Instead, we glorify God that He would deal with a lowly person like Mary in giving her such a special place in his eternal purposes.

But there is another side to this wonderful story, and the Lord gets the glory for this also that I am about to say. Immediately following the revelation from God that Mary was to give birth to the Son of the Highest, Mary went to see Elisabeth to tell her about the angel Gabriel's appearance to her and the message he had given her. This caused Elisabeth to rejoice with her, assuring her that the Lord would do as He had said.

But then Mary broke out in praise to the Lord for even more than what He had said to her. Mary's words through what is called her Magnificat because through it all, she was magnifying the Lord. It showed her acquaintance with the Word of God in the Old Testament, but it also spoke of God's work of salvation in her own heart. Nothing is said about God delivering His people from Rome, but she did speak of God's word to the fathers of Israel, and especially to Abraham. Thus, it seems clear that Mary understood that the Son of God who would become a human being through her, would ultimately be a King, yet His coming was first of all to be a Savior.

We do not believe along with the Catholics in the immaculate conception

of the Virgin Mary, that she was born without sin. But we must confess that God had done a most gracious work in her heart prior to Gabriel's visit to her, and her praise to the Lord was primarily over God's grace in saving her. By her own confession, she was in need of salvation,

And perhaps she was well acquainted with Isaiah's prophecy in chapter 7, verse 14. Ahaz, the king of Judah, was told to ask God for a sign. But he refused to do it. And so the Lord gave him a sign anyway. And this was it:

11 Ask thee a sign of the LORD thy God; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above.

12 But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the LORD.

13 And he said, Hear ye now, O house of David; Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also?

14 Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel (Isa. 7:11-14).

Personally I have no doubt but that our country is in greater need today than it has ever been to hear the true message of the coming of Christ into the world. For many years there have been those in our country who have wanted to "take Christ out of Christmas." This year those same people, or those who are just like them, are trying to get God out of Thanksgiving. I heard one announcer on TV arguing with "a guest" he had appearing on his program with him, and the announcer said that people need God, and there are millions that want God in their lives. But his "guest" promptly responded by saying that to go back to God is to go back to the dark ages!

God has done to many in our nation what He did years ago to the people of Israel. He has given them a spirit of slumber. He has put them to sleep. He has closed their eyes so that they cannot see, and He has closed their ears so that they cannot hear. They feel that they are so smart, and they are trying to force our whole nation into the dream land they live in, not knowing that God has put them to sleep.

The Lord Jesus Christ was born of a virgin. Joseph was not His Father. God was, and is, His Father. He came into this world as an infant Son of Mary, but that child had been conceived by the Holy Spirit, and so while He was truly Man, sinless Man, perfect Man, He also remained the Son of God. He had to be a Man in order to die for men, for human beings; He had to be God because only a sinless sacrifice could be acceptable to God.

Back in the Garden of Eden the Lord announced to the Devil that it would be *the seed of the woman who would bruise his, that is, the serpent's, head*. And in those words we have a prediction of one who would be born of a woman who would come to defeat the Devil, and set sinners free from his dominion.

Many people today also think that to believe there is a Devil is also to go back to the dark ages. It's not wonder that people deny the existence of the Devil because the Bible tells us that the Devil has "blinded the minds of those who believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, Who is the image of God, should shine into them" (2 Cor. 4:4). The Devil is very much alive, but he doesn't want people to know that. If people would only take the time to read the Bible, asking God for understanding of His truth, they would soon understand that Jesus Christ is the God-Man, Who came to be the Savior of all who trust in Him and His death on the Cross, where He offered Himself as a Lamb without blemish that guilty sinners, trusting in Him, would have their sins forgiven and receive the gift of eternal life.

There is only one God, and only one Savior by Whom we can come to Him. There are not many gods and many saviors. Just one God, and one Savior. So instead of trying to get rid of God (which no one can do), we need to realize that what the Bible says is true. We need God. Our need is desperate. But we can only come to Him through His Son Whom he sent into the world as a Man, that we might have a Savior. All that it takes to make guilty sinners acceptable to God, Jesus Christ did when He came into this world to offer Himself as a sacrifice for sinners who could be saved no other way.