

GOD'S ANNOUNCEMENT TO MARY

Luke 1:26-56

Intro: I am turning aside from my present series on 1 John to bring a series of three messages having to do with the Christmas Season. My first message today has to do with Mary, the mother of our Lord. The second message will have to do with Joseph, who was betrothed to Mary. The third message will have to do with the shepherds. In each case God's message was given directly to the person involved by an angel, called Gabriel in Mary's case, but simply "the angel of the Lord" with Joseph and the shepherds. But very likely it was Gabriel in all three cases.

The first announcement is in the Gospel of Luke. The second announcement is in the Gospel of Matthew. And the third announcement is also in the Gospel of Luke.

All three of these accounts are familiar to most Christians. They used to be familiar to a much larger group outside of the Church, but sadly, as more and more opposition has arisen in the world toward anything that has to do with the Christ, less and less people are familiar with the Biblical record. This really tragic, but it does not affect in anyway the truthfulness of what has been given to us in the Bible. Tragically the Christmas season has been commercialized to the point where it has nothing to do with the Lord Jesus Christ, but those who know the Lord as their Savior, still rejoice in the historic fact that the Lord Jesus Christ was born of the virgin Mary, and that God the Father sent His Son to be the Savior of the world. And it is in the Bible that we get the truth regarding this most amazing of all births that have ever taken place on this earth.

Now as I begin this morning by speaking of God's message to the virgin Mary of Nazareth, I want to give you very briefly some of the details given in the OT which give us the foundation of that which is described here in Luke chapter 1. Of course I must do this in survey form because the subject is so great that entire books have been written upon it. Let me begin with the days of Adam and Eve. We can't go any farther back than that in human history because Adam and Eve were the first people God created when he made the heaven and the earth. As we enter this Christmas season, all of us would do well to go back to the first three chapters of Genesis to refresh our minds, or to learn if you have never read those chapters, to see what God promised Adam and Eve soon after they sinned against God by eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of God and

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evil. The Lord had warned them that if they ate of that fruit, they would surely die. They ate it, Eve first, and then Adam. They immediately experienced spiritual death because we read about how they tried to hide from God. Then God in an act of grace put them out of the Garden of Eden before they could eat of the tree of life and live forever in their sin. But before He did, He asked Adam if he had eaten the forbidden fruit. Adam confessed to the Lord that he had, but blamed Eve because she had given the fruit to him. Then God examined Eve why she had done what she did, and she said the serpent, Satan, had deceived her, and so she had eaten it. Then the Lord turned to the serpent and immediately pronounced judgment on him in these words found in Genesis 3:14-15:

14 And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life:

15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

It is this fifteenth verse that makes the point that we all need to understand. The Lord did not speak to Satan about Adam's seed, which would have been the usual way to talk about a child, but the Lord spoke of her seed.

Now I don't know how much Adam and Eve understood about this at the time, maybe more than we think, but in Isaiah's day the Lord made clear why He had spoken of the seed of the woman, or the woman's offspring. This is a verse that you probably here quoted by pastors and other Bible teachers during this season because it amplifies the promise that God gave to Adam and Eve in Genesis 3. Now I am speaking of Isaiah 7:14 where we read these words. God had told King Ahaz to ask Him for a sign. Ahaz refused to do it, and so God told the King that He would give him a sign anyway. And this was what the Lord said:

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.

Scholars have argued about this prophecy because the word "virgin" here can mean either a young married woman, or a woman who has never been married. And some assume that because this had never happened, that, therefore, it could not happen. But this is one prophecy (among many) that we can prove *because it did happen!* God is our Creator as well as our God. He is not limited in any way as we are. Even as difficult a time

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as we may have in explaining God in His infinite power and infinite wisdom, yet this was something that was ordained by God before there was any creation. Don't be surprised if God does things that never have been done before, or things which we cannot do. The Bible is full of illustrations of His sovereign power. God is our Creator, and He can do whatever He needs to do to meet our needs. And there is not greater need that any of us has, than the need we have to be saved from the penalty and power of our sins. I can't save you because I can't even save myself. Neither can you save yourself, nor even help to save me. We need someone to help us who is not under judgment like we are. And the only way that that could have ever been done would be for someone to take our place, and pay our penalty, and the only One Who could do that was the Son of God. But He had to become a Man in order to do it. That is why we ought to revel in the statement, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and thou shalt call His Name Immanuel," which means *God is with us!* He came born of a virgin because that was the only way He could come. Anyone who has a human father and a human mother is just another sinner who needs to be saved.

It was a problem to Mary when the Angel Gabriel told her what was going to happen to her. In Luke 1:34 we have her question: "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" Mary knew that the only way, the God-given way, to have a son, was to get married. What was the angel Gabriel's answer to her question? We have it in Luke 1:35. (Read.) Her child would be her son, but He would be conceived by the Holy Spirit because He was the Son of God – the God-Man!

But now let me back up a little. What the Lord told Satan while Adam and Eve were still in the Garden of Eden, happened soon after the dawn of creation. When God created the heaven and the earth, It did not take Him a long time. He did it all in six, twenty-four hour, days. And when He finished the sixth day, the whole universe was in full operation. I can understand why the evolutionists say it took millions and millions of years to evolve. Nobody could name enough years because actually it would never have happened. The whole idea of evolution is idiotic! And yet in our leading universities if you don't believe in evolution, you are OUT!

But now let us think of the question of years. I am inclined to believe that the universe is not old. I think it is more like 6,000 years old. But the prediction that God made to Satan was a long time before Christ came,

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even if it was only in the thousands of years. And then when Isaiah was led by the Spirit of God to write that “a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, that was still 700 years (in round numbers) before Christ was born. There are other prophecies in the OT which have to do with the coming of Christ. In fact, that is what the Jewish people believed.

But then remember that when these people were living on the earth about whom we read especially in Matthew and Luke, Mary, Joseph and the others, it had been approximately 400 years since there has been any fresh word from God. Now, if those ancient prophecies had not been fulfilled in all of that time, from a human perspective, what possibility do you think that they would be fulfilled? Absolutely *zilch!* Now that is a word you will find in your English dictionary. It mean *zero, nothing, no possibility whatever.* Why did not Mary bend over in uncontrollable laughter when Gabriel said to her what he did? Why didn't she say, “I used to believe that, but I don't believe it anymore.” I will tell you why she didn't. Mary believed, and there were many others in those days, believed, that it was God Who made that promise in the Garden of Eden, and then renewed it in Isaiah's day. And she believed that the promises of God were certain, and that you might have to wait and wait, and wait, and then wait after that, but eventually God would stand by His Word!

The Apostle Peter brings that up in the last chapter of his second epistle. People were scoffing at the promise that the Lord had made that He would come back again. But Peter believed it! And the Apostle John believed it even years after Peter had died. And if I were to ask you if you believe that Jesus Christ is coming again, most of you would say that you firmly believe what He said, that He would be back. You see, you and I might make promises that we forget that we made, or that we have not been able to keep, but those things are never true of God. If God promised it, you believe it, because He is going to do it. Habakkuk gives us this word about believing the Lord. You will find it in Habakkuk 2:1-3:

1 I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reprov'd.

2 And the Lord answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it.

3 For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.

I do not believe in the immaculate conception of the virgin Mary. By that

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I mean that I do not believe that she is God. But I would have no argument with someone who said that she was probably the most godly woman who ever lived, maybe even more godly than the most godly of men. Gabriel said, in effect, that she was the most blessed among women. Even though she had been waiting for the Messiah Who had not come, she firmly believed He would come. And so when Gabriel told her what he did according to Luke 1:35 and 36, she responded in verse 38, “Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy word.” And the angel departed from her.”

“Mission accomplished,” Gabriel would have reported to the Lord because with Mary, as with us, the Lord works in us “both to will and to do of His good pleasure” (Phil. 2:13)

Let me conclude by reading Luke 2:39-56. Here we have what Elisabeth said to Mary, and then beginning with verse 46 and reading on down to verse 56 we see what Mary said about herself, and then what she said about God. And I would call your special attention to verses 46 and 47.

Concl: How should we apply all of this to ourselves? The virgin Mary is a great example to us of humility, and she also is a great example to us of faith. Men, I think we especially should pay close attention to Mary, and learn all that we can from her and her relationship with the Lord. All of us, men and ladies, have trouble with humility, and we all have trouble trusting the Lord the way we should. But I think that our wives and our sisters and our daughters can teach us a great deal about how to love the Lord, and how to yield ourselves to the Lord, and how to trust the Lord as we should day by day. We are not to worship Mary, but we are to thank God for what we see in her that helps us to love and trust the Lord the way she did.