

005a The Angel Gabriel Appears to Mary Luke 1:26-38

“And in the sixth month”, that is to say the sixth month after Elizabeth’s conception; that’s how long John the Baptist was conceived before Jesus, and how long he was born before Jesus. It would also seem that’s how long it was between John’s public ministry and the public ministry of Jesus. John came before Christ as His forerunner on Earth; however, Jesus existed before John, as the eternal Son of God. We looked at John the Baptizer as the forerunner when we started studying the book of John.

In the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, the angel Gabriel was sent or dispatched. The angel Gabriel was sent to Daniel 500 years earlier to give him the time of the Messiah’s coming, and he was sent six months earlier to acquaint Zechariah with the conception, birth, character, and office of the forerunner of the Messiah.

The name Gabriel means “man of God”. Gabriel is the messenger of peace and restoration. Gabriel gave Daniel the explanation of his two visions in Daniel 8:16 and 9:21. The only other angel of God that is mentioned by name in Scripture is Michael, who is the destroyer, the champion of God against evil; he’s the minister of wrath. Michael is the forerunner of Jehovah the judge; Gabriel is the forerunner of Jehovah the savior. If you think back to Daniel 12:13, which says, “But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia”, you will see that sometimes it takes the two most powerful angels of God to withstand Satan. If the two chief angels had trouble resisting Satan, don’t think that you can resist him by yourself.

It says in this verse that in the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent. This verb is from “apostello”, from which we get the word “apostle”. The angel Gabriel is God’s messenger to Mary, just as he was God’s messenger to Zechariah in Luke 1:19. [Luke 1:19] The angel Gabriel gave the annunciation or announcing of the incarnation of Jesus Christ. (The church observes the annunciation on March 25, although there is no reason to think that Jesus was actually born on December 25th.)

Now, here in verse 26, it says that the angel Gabriel was dispatched to a city of Galilee, which is named Nazareth. Why were they in Nazareth? Since Joseph and Mary were both of the family of David, wasn’t their estate in Bethlehem? It seems that they should have been there and not in Nazareth. Even after the return from captivity, the Bible tells us that the families went to reside in the cities in which they originally belonged.

I think that it is probable that they moved to Galilee for fear of making Herod Jealous. Herod had usurped that throne, even though others had an indisputable right to it. By keeping out of the way, they avoided the effects of Herod’s jealousy.

The whole country of Galilee was mean, which means that it was contemptible, at least with the Jews. In John 7:52, they observe that no prophet arose out of it. It says, “They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.” They were either lying when they said that, or they were terribly

mistaken. Jonah was of Gathhepher, which was in the tribe of Zebulun, which tribe was in Galilee. The Jews themselves say that Jonah, the son of Amittai was of Zebulun, and that his father was of Zebulun and his mother was of Asher, of which both tribes were in Galilee. Besides, just because one had not yet arisen in Galilee, that doesn't mean that one should not arise; does Scripture say that one won't arise? [Isaiah 9:1] A prophet and even the Messiah, the great light should arise in Galilee!

Nazareth was particularly despicable among the Jews. That's why we have the words of Nathanael in John 1:46, "can any good thing come out of Nazareth? Yet an angel was sent there with a message and Nazareth is where the mother of our Lord dwelt.

In Matthew 2, we see that Joseph in returning from Egypt was going to Judea, where he belonged, but he turned aside to go back to Nazareth again, taking Mary and Jesus with him. There could be no mistaking that that which the prophets spoke was fulfilled: He would be called a Nazarene. That's where He was conceived (notice that's where life begins), that's where He grew up; He was a Nazarene.

The angel Gabriel was dispatched to the city of Nazareth to a virgin who was espoused or betrothed. There was usually 10 months to a year between the contract of marriage and the celebration of the nuptials. The nature of this engagement was so binding that unfaithfulness between the two was considered adultery and was punishable by death. A virgin is pure and clean.

Nothing in Scriptures is more completely and guardedly presented than the virgin birth of our Lord. The great issues involved were not merely the reputation of His mother, but the value of His relationship to both God and man; and those relationships depend greatly upon the question of His paternity. Once we see that He had no human father, the miracle of His sinless life, the value of His sacrificial death, and the secrets of His Sonship are all revealed. No man, descended on both sides from Adam, has ever approached a sinless life. Everyone deserves death, and no one can save himself; much less others. There must be a cause for His unapproachable perfection, and it is found only in the fact that He was born, not of bloods, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Jesus is born within wedlock, to protect the name of Mary as well as to link Him with the regal line of David, and Joseph, the husband, is assured of the facts in a dream that is presented in Matthew 1:20. Mary is presented as virtuous and chaste and God-fearing, but her most blessed place among women is not awarded to her as if it's something she earned, but it's presented as divine favor.

[Isaiah 7:14] You don't ask for a sign for a pledge from God, but God gave them one any way. This word "virgin" properly means a girl, maiden, virgin or young woman who is unmarried and is of marriageable age. The word is derived from the verb "alam", which means to conceal, to hide, or to cover. (Think about the way they wore veils to conceal themselves, and the way the Muslims still do.) This word that is translated here as "virgin" is applied to Rebekah in Genesis 24:43, and to Miriam, the sister of Moses in

Exodus 2:8. This word occurs only in seven places in the OT. Besides these two already mentioned, it is found in Psalm 68:25, Song of Solomon 1:3, Song of Solomon 6:8 and Proverbs 30:19.

In all these places, except perhaps in Proverbs, it is used in its obvious natural sense, to denote a young, unmarried female. In the Syriac, this word means to grow up. Therefore, the derivatives are applied to youth (both young men and young women) who are “growing up”.

The etymology of the word requires us to suppose that it means one who is growing up to a marriageable state, or the age of puberty. The word “maiden” or “virgin” expresses the correct idea. The Hebrews usually employed the word that is used here to denote a pure virgin. Isaiah tells us that there would be a sign, and back in Luke, it’s time for that sign to occur.

The time has come to give a son to a virgin, a savior to the world, a pattern to mankind, a sacrifice for sinners... Praise God! The angel Gabriel is sent from God, not to the palaces of the great and rich, but to a poor maiden who was the espoused wife of a carpenter. The Son of God comes to humble the proud, and to honor poverty, weakness and contemptibleness. God has chosen an obscure place for the birth of the Messiah; for His sufferings and death, He will choose the greatest city.

Gabriel was sent to a virgin, who was espoused to Joseph, of the house of David. The grammatical construction of the sentence lets the phrase “of the house of David” be attached either to the virgin or to Joseph, and in fact, it’s true of both of them. We studied this in the study of the genealogy of Jesus.

The Messiah would be born to the house of David, and the house of David, at least in this case, consisted of a poor carpenter and a poor virgin (we’ll see just how poor later), and they lived in the lowly city of Nazareth in the despised area of Galilee.

The virgin’s name was Mary, or more appropriately, Miriam. Miriam was a common name among the Jews, and was the name of the sister of Moses and Aaron.

Verse 28: And entering in unto her, into her house, into her room, the angel said, “Hail, *thou that art* highly favored, the Lord *is* with thee”. “Hail”, is literally “rejoice!” and as a greeting, it means, all health, happiness, and prosperity attend thee; this can be found in Matthew 28:9, and is simply a joyous greeting.

“Thou that art highly favored”, is from [a perfect, passive, participle of] the Greek word “charito”, and means endowed with grace or enriched with grace. It does not mean full of grace, as some may say. [Ephesians 1:6] “Wherin He has made us accepted,” is the same word. Literally, it says, “To the praise of the glory of his grace, ***which graces us*** in the beloved”.

“Hail! Thou that are endowed with grace, the Lord is with you.” The Lord is with you. In Judges 6:12, that’s what the angel said to Gideon. And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, The LORD *is* with thee, thou mighty man of valor. And in Ruth 2:4, Boaz used the phrase with the reapers: “And, behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said unto the reapers, The LORD *be* with you. And they answered him, The LORD bless thee.” If the Lord is with you, who can be against you? Many will be against you, but none will prevail.

The phrase, “Blessed art thou among women”, isn’t in the oldest and best manuscripts here, but it is down in verse 42. And, we’ll find later in 11:27 that she’s pronounced as blessed among women by another woman. You can cross it out in your Bibles, or you can leave it there. The Holy Spirit didn’t put there originally, but it doesn’t detract from the passage.

“And when she saw him”, or literally, when she perceived it, “she was troubled at his saying”; she was agitated, “and ***cast in her mind*** what manner of salutation this should be.” “Cast in her mind”, is a common verb for reckoning up different reasons. She was both upset and puzzled. She might be wondering if she were seeing things, or perhaps she thought she was having a dream. (Although, it’s interesting that God comes in dreams quite often, even sending the messenger to Joseph in a dream.) She may have been wondering if this were truly a messenger from God.

Why would she have been upset and puzzled? “**What manner of salutation this should be.**” It was not usual with the Jews for a man to use any salutation to a woman; with them it was not lawful to be done in any shape or form; not by a messenger; not even by her own husband. So Mary might well have good reason to be thrown into some concern of what should be the meaning of this; and especially, that she should be addressed in such language, and saluted as a favorite of God. This was just not typical behavior, and I would venture to say that dealing with an angel just wasn’t all that common, either.

[Luke 1:30] “And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God.” Remember, back in verse 13, the angel perceived that Zechariah was troubled and had to calm him down a little. Here, the angel perceives that Mary is troubled, with everything that is going through her mind, and so he says, “Fear not”. “Fear not, Mary.” He calls her by name. Those who are righteous are known to angels by name.

Why does he tell her not to fear? Because she has found favor with God. She’s found ***grace*** with God.

Grace. It’s the same root as “chairO” which means rejoice and “charitoO”, which we looked at just a moment ago. The expression, “To find favor” is a common OT phrase. The root is very ancient and a very common word with a variety of applied meanings. Primarily, it means, “*that which gives joy or pleasure*”, and hence it often is talking about outward beauty, loveliness, or something that delights the beholder.

All of these meanings come from the notion of sweetness, charm, loveliness, joy, and delight, like words of grace (Luke 4:22), growing grace (Ephesians 4:29), with grace (Colossians 4:6). The notion of kindness is in it also, especially of God towards men. In Acts 20:24, we read about the Gospel of the grace of God in contrast with law or works (John 1:16).

Homer, of Ulysses going to the assembly: “Athene shed down *manly grace* or *beauty* upon him” (*Odyssey*, ii, 12); and the Septuagint, in Psalms 45:2 says, “Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.” This word “grace” can also be found in Proverbs 1:9 and 3:22. The same idea is conveyed in Luke 4:22, which says, “they wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth”, literally, the words of grace, which were uttered by Jesus. Also, in Ephesians 4:29, which says, “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.”

Grace can be used as a sentiment of kindness, favor or goodwill expressed toward another. You can find this in 2 Corinthians 8:6,7, and 9, and in 9:8. You can also find it in Luke 1:30, 2:40 and 2:47. Also, it’s used for thankfulness, as in Luke 6:32,33, and 34, as well as 17:9, but it’s especially used in the sentiment of thanks to God, as it is in Romans 6:17, 1 Corinthians 15:57, 2 Corinthians 2:14 and 2 Timothy 1:3.

The higher Christian significance of the word is based on the emphasis of freeness in the gift or favor (particularly in the NT, denoting the free, absolute, and loving kindness of God toward men), is sharply contrasted with debt, law, works and sin. Interestingly, the word does not occur in the books of Matthew and Mark.

“And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.” “Thou shalt conceive” is the same verb used with Elizabeth, but adding “in thy womb” to it. Isaiah 7:14 tells us, “Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.” The angel is telling Mary that she’s going to conceive in her womb, a virgin womb; that in itself is a miracle that was understood even then. The angel is telling Mary that she’s going to give birth to the Messiah. She’s going to bring forth a son and she’s to call his name Jesus.

This is the same thing that Joseph is told in Matthew 1:21, except there, the angel adds, “for he shall save his people from their sins.” Mary apparently didn’t need that additional explanation. The angel told her that she’s going to conceive in her virgin womb and bring forth a son; she ***knows*** that he will save his people from their sins.

It’s interesting that the exact same word is used in Matthew 1:21 as it is here in Luke 1:31. In both cases, the person to whom the angel is speaking, simply tells them they that they “shall call” his name Jesus. Although we know that Joseph had a choice, the angel knew the outcome of that choice. In Matthew, the angel basically committed Joseph to the office of a father.

The name Jesus is the Greek form of a Hebrew name, which had been the names of two notorious individuals in Jewish history. One was Joshua, the successor of Moses, and the other was Jeshua, the high-priest who worked with Zerubbabel in the re-establishment of the civil and religious political body of the Jews when they returned from Babylon.

The original form of the name is Jehoshua, and was contracted to Joshua or Jeshua. Joshua, the son of Nun, who was the successor of Moses, was originally name Hoshea, which means “saving”, but was altered by Moses into Jehoshua, which means “Jehovah, our Salvation”. (Numbers 13:16) The meaning of the name is quite appropriate when expressed as the title “Savior”, which is appropriately applied to our Lord. (Luke 1:47; Luke 2:11; John 4:42)

Joshua, the son of Nun, is a type of Christ in his office of captain and deliverer of his people, in the military aspect of his saving work, just as Jesus is presented in Revelation 19:11-16. Just as God’s revelation to Moses was in the character of a lawgiver, his revelation to Joshua was in that of the Lord of Hosts, in Joshua 5:13,14. Under Joshua, the enemies of Israel were conquered and the Israelites were established in the land flowing with milk and honey. So Jesus leads his people in the fight with sin and temptation. Jesus is the leader of the faith that overcomes the world, and if we follow Him, we will enter into rest.

The priestly office of Jesus is foreshadowed in the high priest Jeshua, who appears in the vision of Zechariah in court before God, under accusation of Satan, and clad in filthy garments. Jeshua stands not only for himself, but also as the representative of sinning and suffering Israel. Satan is defeated. The Lord rebukes him, and declares that he will redeem and restore this erring people; and in token thereof he commands that the accused priest be clad in clean robes and crowned with a priestly mitre. (Zechariah 3:1-10, compare to Ezra 2:2)

So, in Jeshua, we have a type of our “Great High Priest”, who knows our infirmities and in all points was tested as we are. He confronted Satan in the wilderness. His royal robes were left behind. He counts not “equality with God a thing to be grasped at”, but took the form of a servant and humbled himself and was obedient even unto death. (Philippians 2:6,7) He who knew no sin was made to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in him. (2 Corinthians 5:21) He is both a priest and a victim. He pleads for sinful man before God’s throne. He will redeem man. He will rebuke Satan and cast him down. He will raise and save and purify men of weak natures, rebellious wills, and furious passions. He will take deniers like Peter and persecutors like Saul of Tarsus and make them witnesses of his grace and preachers of his love and power. His Kingdom shall be a kingdom of Priests. The song of his redeemed church shall be, “Unto him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins by his own blood, and made us to be a kingdom, to be priests unto his God and Father; to him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.” (Revelation 1:5,6)

“And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.” Jesus. Our savior and our great high priest. He’s prophet, priest and king. Verse 32: “He shall be great.” No ifs, ands, or buts there. “He shall be great, and shall be called Son of the Most High.”

It doesn’t actually say *the* Son of the Most High here, although we already know the ending and know that He is *the* Son. There is no definite article in the Greek in this verse. However, down in verse 35, we do see that He is he is the Holy Son of God. [Luke 6:35] We too can be sons of God.

Not just children of God. The Greek word τέκνον/teknon (child) is often used interchangeably with the Greek word υιου/huios (son), but is never applied to Jesus. While in teknon is implied dependence upon the relationship with the parents, huios focuses on the person himself. It suggests individuality instead of descent, but if used for descent, brings out the fact that the descendent was worthy of the parent. In Luke 1, we see that Jesus is worthy to be called son, and in Luke 6, we see that we can also be worthy, based upon our obedience.

The word *huios* marks the son-like relation as carrying with it privileges, dignity and freedom. Therefore, it is the only term that is appropriate to describe Jesus’ sonship. A verse we’re all familiar with says, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son (huios) that whosoever is believing in Him may not perish, but have age-lasting life.” [Romans 8:14: For whoever are being led *by* God's spirit, these are sons of God.] Through Christ, the dignity of sons is bestowed upon mature believers, those who are obedient, so that the same word is appropriate: Sons of God; mature children. I pray that we all strive to be mature. We’re to be Christ-like, and that’s what it means to be a Christian.