

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

We've been studying the event in which the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary to tell her that she would bear the Messiah. This message was delivered about six months after Elizabeth was informed of the conception and impending birth of John, who would be the forerunner of the Messiah.

Gabriel was sent to Nazareth to tell them. Jesus was of Nazareth. He was born in Bethlehem, but the conception took place in Nazareth. The Bible tells us when life begins! Jesus was of Nazareth!

Mary and Joseph had probably moved to Galilee to keep from making Herod jealous, because of their legal right to the throne that he had usurped, but the Messianic prophecies tell us clearly where He would be from, and nothing could stop the prophecies from coming true; especially not an earthly king. Prophecies are nothing but history that hasn't happened!

Nazareth was basic or mean and particularly despised among the Jews, and our Savior would also be simple. He would not live as a king here on earth; that's not where His Kingdom was to be.

He would be born of a virgin. Nothing in Scriptures is more closely guarded than this prophecy and its fulfillment. You can be a Christian and not know about the virgin birth, but I don't think you can be a Christian and deny the virgin birth of Jesus the Christ.

We learned that Mary had faith. The angel said that she "was endowed with grace". She didn't doubt or question the validity of what the angel was saying, but she was given a sign. Joseph also was a man of faith; they were both righteous, and Jesus would be born within wedlock.

Mary and Joseph were informed about the birth of the Messiah of the world, and how it would involve them. They were told of coming events; history that was unfulfilled at the time that it was given to them.

This child that will be born, this Son given as a Savior to the world is the child that is referred to in Isaiah 9:6, which says, "for unto us a child is born, unto us, a Son is given". This child will fulfill the offices that are spoken of in Scripture. In his prophetic office, he will be that great prophet that Moses spoke of, mighty in word and deed, in his doctrine and miracles. In his priestly office, he is our great high priest, both in the oblation or offering of himself and his intercession for us. In his kingly office, He's the King of kings and the Lord of lords. In the entirety of His office, he's our mediator; our Savior; the author of our salvation.

In this child will be displayed the glory of all the divine perfections. He will be great in all His works: The miracles that he wrought as proof that He was Messiah, the work of redemption, the resurrection of himself from the dead, and the glory of which He is now

possessed in human nature at the Father's right hand where He is exalted above all principality and power.

Verse 32: "And the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David." Christ, as divinity, is the Son of God, and as man, He's the son of David. "The son of David" is a name often given to the Messiah, and by which he was well known among the Jews; and as Christ descended from him as man, in a literal sense, he had a right to the throne of his father David.

But here, the Bible is not talking about the throne in a literal sense, but in a figurative sense. His Kingdom is not of this world. God the Father has set Him as King over His holy hill of Zion, and he is accountable for his government to him. One day, He will deliver it up, complete and perfect, and we will be a part of it.

Verse 33: "And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever," or literally, into the ages. Not over just the Jews in a literal sense, who are the posterity of Jacob, but over all believers, both Jew and Gentile. Just as David reigned over the Idumeans, Syrians and others, as well as over the house of Judah and Israel, so also Jesus, the Son of David shall reign over both Jews and Gentiles. His Kingdom will be from one end of the earth to the other. I want to be a part of that Kingdom! We can all be a part of that Kingdom!

"And of his kingdom there shall be no end." Luke tells us there will be no termination of this Kingdom. Isaiah 9:7 tells us, "Of the increase of *his* government and peace *there shall be* no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever." Daniel 2:44 tells us, "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never [to the ages shall not; the text does not say "never"] be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, *but* it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever [to the ages; not forever]." [The Emphasized Bible by J. B. Rotherham, an excellent translation, words it thus: "And, in the days of those kings, shall the God of the heavens, set up, a kingdom which, to the ages, shall not be destroyed, and, the kingdom, to another people, shall not be left, —it shall break in pieces and make an end of all these kingdoms, but, itself, shall stand to the ages."]

[1 Corinthians 15:24-27] The **reign** of Christ is for ages or eons; it's for a long, but limited time. He then gives up the Kingdom to God the Father. The Kingdom itself is endless.

In the gospel that Luke wrote, he reports the perpetuity of this Davidic kingdom over the house of Jacob without the interpretation of spiritual Israel that Paul used. However, that's the true meaning, as Luke clearly knew.

Verse 34: "Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be." She didn't ask this as if she were doubting the truth of the message the angel gave her. She didn't require a sign

as Zechariah did. She's not accused of unbelief as he was; quite the contrary: In verse 45, it's expressly said that she believed.

This isn't a question of whether it will be by a man in a married state or in her present virgin state. Mary clearly understood that the angel meant the latter.

Her words express that she believes what the angel told her and that she believes that this will happen in her current state; she simply desires to be informed of the manner of how this would come about. She accepted the statement as undisputed fact, but wanted to know the means that it would be brought about. Mary knew that according to prophecy, the Messiah was to be born of a virgin, and she perceived that by the angel's message that she was that virgin. But, in her limited human understanding, the same limited understanding that we all have, she could not imagine how it should be affected. This is made clear by her next statement:

"Seeing I know not a man." "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" The Arabic version reads, "seeing that I know not a husband", and the Greek implies that also. This is not talking specifically about Joseph or any other man for that matter. Although she was espoused to Joseph, he had not yet taken her as his wife; they were not yet come together. In Matthew 1:18, we see that she was found with child before they did come together. [Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.] Mary was a pure virgin, untouched by man. The words used are simply a modest way of expressing carnal copulation. Genesis 4:1 uses the same expression, when it says, "And Adam knew Eve, his wife".

Verse 35: "And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost [Spirit] shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee." The angel answered her question and gave her an account of what was going to happen, as well as some comforting statements for the strengthening of her faith. She already had faith obviously, but to those who have, God gives more. Acts 5:32 says that "God gives the Holy Spirit to those who are actively obeying Him." Mary was obedient, she had faith, and she was given more.

"The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee..." The formation of Christ's human nature, though common to all three persons of the Trinity, is most properly ascribed to the Holy Spirit. Not the Father, lest it should be thought that he is only the Father of Jesus. Nor to the Son, since it is to Him that humanity is personally united. But, to the Holy Spirit, who is the one that sanctifies.

His coming upon the virgin has to be understood as being consistent with his omnipresence. The creation of the sinless child in her womb could not have come about in the ordinary manner in which man is formed, but in an extraordinary way. A way that is difficult for man to comprehend. In our feeble minds, it's difficult to even begin to

grasp the implications here, but the implications are great. This young woman is going to give birth to the Messiah; not only the Messiah of the Jews, but the Savior of all mankind. Imagine what must be going through her head as she's told these things!

“The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee”. [Luke 11:20] The “Power of the Highest” isn't referring to the Lord Jesus Christ. He's sometimes called the Power of God, but this is referring to the Holy Spirit, who is styled as the finger of God, and the power from on high.

This finger of God, or “the Power of the Highest”, “shall overshadow thee”. This brings to mind a figure of a cloud coming upon her. This is a picture of the mildest and most gentle operation of divine power that the divine fire should not consume Mary, but make her fruitful. Exodus 33 tells us that no one can see His face and survive.

Throughout Scriptures, we are given the image of a cloud obscuring the face of God. Mark 9:7 says, “And there was a cloud that overshadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him.” [Exodus 40:34] God is obscured by a cloud, but His glory fills the tabernacle. The Holy Spirit will overshadow Mary; protect her; and God's glory will fill her, and she will bless the entire world. The cloud of Glory represents the power and presence of God.

This Power of the Highest would be used not only in forming the child in her womb and the human nature of Christ, but would protect Mary; He would protect Mary from any suspicion of sin, would defend her innocence and virtue, and would move upon Joseph to take her to wife despite the fact that she's pregnant.

Back in Luke 1:35: “Therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.” The Holy One being generated shall be called the Son of God. This name, “The Son of God”, was a recognized name of Messiah, just like the name, “The Son of Man” and “The Son of David”.

Jesus did not often call himself “Son of God”. He obviously did on occasion, as Matthew 27:43 says, [the chief priests are speaking] “He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God.” He never denied that he was the Son of God, as is evidenced in passages such as Matthew 11:27, Luke 10:21 and John 5:19. However, it is the title used by the Father at the Baptism of Jesus in Luke 3:22 and also on the Mount of Transfiguration in Luke 9:35, in which God, as a voice out of a cloud says, “This is my beloved Son: Hear Him”.

The wonder of Mary would increase at these words. Can you imagine being told that you're going to be the mother of the Messiah? I know that my wonder would increase, and not only because I'm a man! The virgin birth of Jesus is plainly set forth here in Luke, as it was in Matthew. Since Luke was a physician, his curiosity had to be piqued. I'm sure that he was hanging onto every word of this miraculous event!

Verse 36: “And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age.” Elisabeth is Mary’s kinswoman. The KJV translates it as cousin, but the nature of the relationship is unknown. The word is a general term that means “of the same family”. But, “your kinswoman Elisabeth has conceived a son in her old age.”

We know that Elisabeth is of the daughter of Aaron on her father’s side, so we can assume that her mother is of the tribe of Judah. Intermarriages between the two tribes of Levi and Judah were common. Although the law forbids the tribes to intermarry in order to preserve the inheritance in each tribe, there was no violation of the law in a marriage between Levi and Judah. Do you know why? Think about it: The tribe of Levi had no inheritance on Earth! Yahweh was their inheritance. John would have both an earthly inheritance and a heavenly inheritance.

Which do you think was more important? Well, the Bible gives more intention to the priestly side of John. We can also have a heavenly inheritance.

But Elizabeth has conceived in her old age. This was given as a sign. Here, it’s being offered to Mary as an unsought sign. She wasn’t seeking a sign; she had faith. In reward for her faith, she’s being given a sign. If Elizabeth has been given the ability to conceive in her old age, and her child is a son, as the angel declared, then this will give credence to the message brought by the angel; she would know that this was truly a message from God. It would strengthen her faith even more, and she would have no doubts that although she’s a virgin, she might conceive and bring forth a son.

Further, the angel says, “And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren.” It was generally known that Elisabeth was barren. It was a sign of reproach among the Jews. Yet, the angel is telling Mary that Elisabeth is six months pregnant. It’s plain that her reproach was lifted, as it’s now apparent that she’s pregnant. In fact, we know that not only has her reproach been lifted, but also she would be blessed; many would be rejoicing at the birth of John. When Mary goes to see her, it will be a sign to Mary that will strengthen her faith.

Verse 37: “For with God nothing shall be impossible.” Literally, it says, “seeing that it will not be impossible with God to fulfill His every declaration.” The word used here is “rhema/word”. Not logos/word, as we studied earlier.

Remember, logos, from lego, means to lay by, to collect, or to gather. It means to put words side by side or gather words together, so to speak. Logos is a collection of not only things in the mind, but the words that express them. Λογος is never used in a merely grammatical sense, but is used as a way of embodying a concept. For example, the Septuagint in Exodus 34:28 refers to the Ten Commandments as τους δεκα λογους or

the ten words and we get our familiar word “Decalogue” from this. A word, *logos*, is that by which we can communicate our will and convey our thoughts.

The word used here in Luke 1:37 is *rhema*. In classical Greek, it signifies a constituent part of speech or writing, and ***not*** the contents as a whole, as the word *logos* does. *Rhema* can be either a single word or a saying or a phrase. (The Greek word *onoma* always means a single word.) *Rhema*, like the Hebrew word *gabar*, sometimes can mean the subject matter of the word; it can mean the ***thing***, as it does in this passage.

There are only three passages in the NT where this meaning is admissible, although the word itself occurs in 65 verses. These passages are Luke 1:37, Luke 2:15, and Acts 5:32, but even in these passages, “sayings” or “declarations” would be more appropriate.

This word “*rhema*” brings out the single item, rather than the entire content, which would be indicated by “*logos*”. What does Genesis 18:14 say? “Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.” The question asked is, “Is any thing too hard for the LORD?” and the expected answer is “NO!” It will not be impossible for God to fulfill every little word and saying! No word from God shall be powerless!

What this verse is saying is consistent with God’s nature. Everything that he has said or promised, He is able to do and He will do! We can rest assured of that. Every word that He has spoken, everything predicted by His prophets, everything declared by His angels concerning things in the past has been fulfilled; therefore, we can rest assured that everything concerning the future will also come to pass. Because everything He says is true, we can rest assured that our salvation is secure; we can also rest assured that the things He has promised concerning our inheritance, our rewards, will also be waiting for us. Our victor’s wreaths are laid up for us! I don’t understand how anyone can doubt!

The angel not only answered her question of how this was to be, but confirms and strengthens her faith in it; he not only gives her a sign, but points out to her the infinite mercies and truths of God. With God, nothing is impossible. That’s something that we need to remember every minute of every day.

Verse 38: “And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord.” In these simple words, she expresses her obedience and faith to the Lord. She calls herself the handmaid of the Lord; she desires to be obedient and subservient to Him. The word used here is *doule* or feminine slave. She acknowledges her unworthiness of anything so great as that which is being bestowed upon her. She has resigned herself to the will of God and of faith in the promise that has been made to her. She’s joyous, I’m sure!

“Be it unto me according to thy word.” In her statement of submissiveness and obedience, she adds her affirmation to the message of the angel. She assents to what the angel said was going to happen. She accepts it and she embraces it; she earnestly desired

that it might be, and she firmly believed that it would be. “I’m a servant of the Lord, and I joyously accept and embrace what’s going to happen.”

“And the angel departed from her.” He had dispatched his message, he had told her of the sign that would affirm and strengthen her faith, and it was time for him to leave.

“For with God, nothing shall be impossible.” Oh, if only we could all have the complete and utter faith and trust in God as this poor little handmaid of God had.