

3. Mary Was Promised a Son

In the last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that the Lord is the One who is able to take away the shame in their lives. Part of the time that shame is the result of sin in the life of a person. However, many times shame is the result of the opinions of other people. We saw that Zacharias and Elizabeth were filled with joy as a result of the fact that God sent the angel, Gabriel, to let them know that they would have a son and take away their shame. In this topic, we are going to see that Gabriel appeared to Mary a few months later. He also brought her a message from God. God did not want her to feel shame even though God knew that there would be many people who would judge Mary and gossip about her.

Luke 1:26-29 says, “Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name *was* Mary. And having come in, the angel said to her, ‘Rejoice, highly favored *one*, the Lord is with you; blessed *are* you among women!’ But when she saw *him*, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was.” In our last topic, we saw that Elizabeth kept it a secret for five months that she had conceived a child. Here, we see that it was in the sixth month of the pregnancy of Elizabeth that the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary.

Luke mentioned that Elizabeth lived in the hills of Galilee. Here, we see that Mary lived in the town of Nazareth in the area of Galilee. We see that the first thing that Luke mentioned about Mary was the fact that she was a virgin. More than 600 years earlier, Isaiah wrote in Isaiah 7:14, “‘Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.’” Gabriel explained to Mary how this birth would happen in Luke 1:35 where we read, “And the angel answered and said to her, ‘*The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.*’” Here, we see that it was essential that Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born to a virgin in order to be the sinless Son of God.

We see that Mary was betrothed to a man by the name of Joseph. The word “betrothed” means *to be promised* to Joseph and was as binding as a marriage. As a result, the Lord also sent an angel to show Joseph in a dream how Jesus was conceived. Matthew 1:23 says, “‘Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,’ which is translated, ‘God with us.’” God knew that Joseph also had to know that the birth of Jesus was a fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah. The genealogy in Matthew shows that Joseph was a descendent of David and so had a legal right to be the King. The genealogy in Luke shows that Mary was also a descendent of David and so had a physical right to the throne. The birth of Jesus fulfilled the promise made to David as recorded in Psalm 89, “‘Your seed I will establish forever, and build up your throne to all the generations.’”

The first thing that the angel said to Mary was, “Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!” Mary was probably still in her late teens at the time the angel appeared to her. As a result, this was a hard promise for her to understand. The angel said she

could be filled with joy. The form of the word translated “highly favored” is only used one other place in the New Testament. Ephesians 1:6 says, “To the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved.” Here, the word is translated “he has made accepted” and speaks of all Christians. It means that we have been made “full of grace” by God. The angel told Mary that God had made her full of grace so that she could receive a special blessing. Mary was greatly troubled in her mind when she heard this and thought about various things as she tried to understand what the angel meant.

The angel quickly ended her confusion. Luke 1:30-33 says, “Then the angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.’” The word translated “favor” is another form of the word translated “full of grace” in the previous paragraph and is usually translated “grace”. Here, we see that the angel told Mary not to fear because she had found grace with God. In fact, God had a very special plan for her life.

The angel went on to tell Mary that she would conceive a Son and that she was to call His name Jesus. The name “Jesus” means *Jehovah is salvation*. The angel also told Mary that Jesus would be the Son of God and that He would fulfill the promises that the Lord had given to David. Luke 1:15 says, “For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb.” In this verse, we see that the angel told Zacharias that John would be great. However, this promise to Mary is much greater. Jesus would be great because He would be the Son of the Highest. The word translated “Highest” is the word that was used to translate “The Most High God” in the Greek translation of the Old Testament so this was a promise that Jesus is the Son of God.

In addition to being the Son of God, the angel also told Mary that the Father would give Jesus the throne of David and that He would rule forever. In 2 Samuel 7, David wanted to build a house for the Lord. Instead, God promised David that his son would build that house. However, God also gave David a great personal promise. 2 Samuel 7:13 says, “He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.” Solomon built a temple. This promise is talking about a different house. This is talking about the household of faith. Galatians 6:10 says, “Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.” Here, we see that the household of faith includes all those who repent of their sin of unbelief and come to God by faith in Jesus and the payment that He made for our sins on the cross. God had promised David that his throne would be established forever. In these verses, we see that Jesus would be the descendent of David that will rule forever because His kingdom will never come to an end because it is an eternal kingdom.

Mary had one other question that she needed the angel to answer. Luke 1:34-38 says, “Then Mary said to the angel, ‘How can this be, since I do not know a man?’ And the angel answered and said to her, ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God. Now indeed,

Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren. For with God nothing will be impossible.’ Then Mary said, ‘Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word.’ And the angel departed from her.” Mary wanted to know how this could happen since she had never had sexual relations with a man.

The angel answered Mary by telling her that this child would be conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit. The power of the Most High God would exert His power on Mary and cause her to conceive that baby in her womb. As a result, her Son would be called the Son of God. To help Mary understand that this was possible, the angel also gave her an announcement about her relative Elizabeth. The angel told her that God had given Elizabeth the power to conceive in her old age and that she was now six months pregnant. The angel said that with God nothing will be impossible.

Mary suddenly faced a choice. The angel had told her that this child would be conceived by the Holy Spirit, but the people of Nazareth had not been told. Once they found out that she was pregnant, Mary knew that she could be accused of adultery, since she was betrothed to Joseph and he would know that he was not the father of the baby she was carrying. Deuteronomy 22:20-21 says, “‘But if the thing is true, *and evidences of virginity* are not found for the young woman, then they shall bring out the young woman to the door of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her to death with stones, because she has done a disgraceful thing in Israel, to play the harlot in her father's house. So you shall put away the evil from among you.’” Mary knew that she could be stoned to death. Mary could have chosen to say that she was not willing to face that possibility.

Instead, Mary said, “Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word.” Here, we see that Mary was willing to walk by faith and trust the Lord to work out all of the details. She was willing to accept the gossip of the people of Nazareth and trust the Lord to fulfill His Word. Matthew 1:18-19 says, “Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. Then Joseph her husband, being a just *man*, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly.” Here, we see that Joseph did not want to make her a public example and have her stoned to death. The Lord allowed Joseph time to make this decision and then sent the angel to tell how Jesus had been conceived.

We see that Joseph also chose to accept the gossip of the people of Nazareth. Matthew 1:24-25 says, “Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name Jesus.” God gave both Joseph and Mary the strength for the future. We also want to help our children understand that God will give them strength for every situation that they face in life. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children how to trust the Lord in every situation.