

WINTER 2026-27

YOU[®]

JESUS, GOD WITH US

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THE LIFESTYLE OF
A WITNESS





A STUDY ABOUT THE BIRTH AND LIFE OF CHRIST

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Since around the 1800s, piped systems have conveniently brought clean and accessible running water into buildings. The first piped system was invented in Falmouth, Jamaica, in 1799.¹ Today, about 75% of the world's population has access to water through a plumbing system. Before this technology was invented people used a variety of methods to obtain clean water within their homes. Some methods were better than others, but none of these methods was as wonderful as the Falmouth piped system.

The birth of Jesus was also a turning point in history. Before Jesus came in the world, God spoke to His people in "various ways" through the prophets (Heb. 1:1). The prophetic message of the Old Testament is great. It can make "one wise unto salvation" (2 Tim. 3:15) and speaks about the promise of the gospel (Rom. 1:1–2). However, an encounter with Jesus provides someone with a

"system" that makes everything before it seem incomplete in comparison.

Most people, even if they decide to modify the technology or the means, want to have access to a modern plumbing system. The 25% of the world that lacks access would happily accept the offer of this technology, given the right conditions. Sadly, these numbers are reversed when it comes to those who have accepted Jesus. About 71% of the world is not Christian, and about 40% have no access to the gospel.²

In this study, we will see how Jesus is the only one who can provide the world with salvation because He is the only one fit to offer it. He is the unique God-Man who came to dwell with us bringing heaven to Earth in a miraculous way that changed everything. The implications of Jesus's incarnation should lead us to seek the one true God.

SESSION 1

THE VIRGIN BIRTH: MARY'S STORY

Leader pages on pp. 102-105

THE POINT:

JESUS WAS CONCEIVED
BY THE HOLY SPIRIT AND
CALLED HOLY FROM THE
BEGINNING.

LUKE 1:26-38

²⁶ In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin engaged to a man named Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And the angel came to her and said, "Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you." ²⁹ But she was deeply troubled by this statement, wondering what kind of greeting this could be.

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³⁰ Then the angel told her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ Now listen: You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David. ³³ He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and his kingdom will have no end."

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³⁴ Mary asked the angel, "How can this be, since I have not had sexual relations with a man?"

³⁵ The angel replied to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore, the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.

³⁶ And consider your relative Elizabeth—even she has conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called childless.

³⁷ **For nothing will be impossible with God."**

³⁸ "See, I am the Lord's servant," said Mary. "May it happen to me as you have said." Then the angel left her.

MEMORY VERSE

KEYWORDS

Gabriel (v.26)—Gabriel is one of only two angels whose name is given in the Bible.

Engaged (v.27)—While the word "betrothed" is not common in contemporary English, it better captures the nature of this relationship. Mary and Joseph were married in every sense other than sexual intimacy.

Son of the Most High (v.32)—

This phrase is simply another way of saying "Son of God." The phrase Most High God does not mean that other gods exist.

The Lord's Servant (v.38)—The Greek word translated "servant" here could also be translated slave. Mary was entirely committed to doing God's will.

WHAT SHOULD WE UNDERSTAND ABOUT HOW JESUS CAME INTO THE WORLD?

Sin corrupts and distorts but it does not have the power to destroy all truth. There are still some universal truths that every human cannot deny. Honey provides us with two examples. First, honey is sweet. People use different words to express the concept of “sweet” in their various languages, but everyone can agree that sweetness does exist in the world. Honey is never labeled as sour or spicy, unless it has spoiled or modified. Second, honey never spoils when properly preserved. If it is kept away from moisture it can last for centuries. Honey will be labeled as sweet until it is no longer pure. The concept of holiness shares similar universal properties. People accept that something in the world is holy. It might be a location, a building, an object, a person, or even reason itself. Regardless, once people attach this label to something it is very difficult and drastic to remove it. Jesus came into the world as holy and incorruptible. His holiness is foundational to who He is and how He came to dwell among us. The virgin birth was essential for Him to do the impossible. He dwelt with us without taking on our corruption.

Found as a Virgin // Luke 1:26–29

For honey to become unsafe for human consumption it must contain over 18% water. The presence of this much moisture makes honey more likely to begin the process of fermentation and get contaminated by something that will cause it to spoil.³ Under normal circumstances this does not happen, but it is possible. We could speculate—and this is an honest but impossible theory—that certain circumstances could have made it impossible for Jesus to be born of a virgin. If God were limited in any way, if there was even a chance of Him being outsmarted or incorrect, He might have been unable to bring about the redemption of mankind. However, there is no chance that God’s plans will ever fail.

This passage highlights various ways that God laid the groundwork for Jesus’s birth to happen

just as He planned. God has all knowledge and ultimate power. This allows Him to use human circumstances to accomplish His will with a 100% success rate. This is why this passage begins with stating that the events took place “in the sixth month” of Elizabeth’s pregnancy (1:26). By itself, this fact might appear to be just a minor historical detail. We must remember that Luke wrote his Gospel to provide an “orderly sequence” of the events surrounding the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus (1:3). Within chapter 1, Luke



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provided several references to chronological markers. These things took place during the “days of Herod” (1:5) while Zechariah was in the sanctuary of the Lord during the “hour of incense” (1:10). This was for the sake of making sure that God’s will would be fulfilled in its “proper time” (1:20).

God was not only concerned with the proper timing, but He also worked with the proper people. Though Joseph was from the house of David, he was living in Nazareth. Joseph was someone of royal heritage in a lowly place. On the other side of the spectrum is Zechariah. He was a priest in the division of Abijah married to Elizabeth from the line of Aaron (1:5). Zechariah and Elizabeth were a righteous couple whose only “disgrace” was their inability to have children (1:25). For the sake of accomplishing His will, which also implies bringing blessing to His people, God does a miracle that allows Elizabeth to conceive bringing an end to her disgrace.

This information has implications for Mary’s situation. Virgins cannot give birth to children just like women who are “well along in years” have almost no chance to bring a child to term. To highlight the importance of Jesus’s uniqueness and holy status, God worked on both ends of the pregnancy spectrum. This was for the sake of highlighting how people need to depend on Him. Just as God made honey with properties that make it sweet and hard to spoil, God orchestrated the events of history so that Jesus would come into the world as a pure and undefiled human who would be incapable of being corrupted.

WHAT SITUATIONS OR CIRCUMSTANCES CAUSE YOU TO DOUBT GOD’S ABILITY TO REDEEM THE WORLD?

Found with Favor // Luke 1:30–33

We might expect Gabriel to appear to Zechariah, Elizabeth, and Joseph. They were all “important people” related to the right families. Each of them played a part in God’s plan because they were committed to living for God and His people. Zechariah responded to God’s instructions, even though he doubted at first (see 1:18–23; 57–66). Joseph was also obedient to God, but we will look at his story in the next session (see Matthew 1:18–25). Though Elizabeth does not speak to God’s angel directly, she does give God all the credit for her pregnancy (Luke 1:25).

CAN YOU LIST PEOPLE IN YOUR LIFE THAT HAVE BEEN USED BY GOD?

Despite God working among these individuals, Gabriel still appears to a small-town virgin woman. She is a nobody who lives in the middle of nowhere. We are not given any explicit information about



DIGGING DEEPER ANGELIC ENCOUNTERS

The angelic encounters of Zechariah and Mary follow a similar format. Both are troubled by the angel (1:12; 1:29) and told not to be afraid (1:13a; 1:30a). Both are told that they would take part in the birth of a male and provided with his name (1:13b; 1:30b). Both are given five descriptions related to each child. John 1:15–17 described John as someone who will:

- 1) be great
- 2) never drink wine
- 3) be filled with the Holy Spirit
- 4) turn people to God
- 5) make the path ready for the Lord

In John 1:32–33, Jesus is described as someone who will:

- 1) be great
- 2) be the Son of the Most High
- 3) have the throne of David
- 4) reign over the house of Jacob
- 5) have an endless kingdom

These five parallels show us that God provided the same care for the lives of both men. In each case, there was an encounter with an angel, a message, and a response.

When have you encountered God in a supernatural way?



her lineage. She is a woman who was just doing what women did back then. Even her introduction is designed to delay the mention of her name—which comes at the end of the verse even in the Greek—so the focus can be on her virginity and her engagement to Joseph. Every reason behind God's decision to use her as a part of His plan is not revealed to us. However, we do know that she was favored by God. Given the twofold repetition of her virginity found in her introduction, we should infer that she took steps to keep herself pure. We can also infer that she did this in cooperation with the support of her unnamed parents, family members, and community. Mary's decision to hold fast to her virginity became one of the reasons for God to include her in His plan.

God allowed Mary to have the same spiritual encounter as Zechariah, the priest in Jerusalem. These two encounters share many parallels, which are discussed in the Digging Deeper feature of this lesson. Here we will focus on one. Both Zechariah and Mary are told "not to be afraid" after their encounter with Gabriel. However, the reasons differ (see 1:13 and 1:31). Zechariah is told that God sent Gabriel to respond to his prayer. Mary is told not to fear because she has "found favor with God." The Greek word for "favor" here is the word "charis," which can also be translated as "grace" (see 2:40).

The point is not that Mary alone received God's grace or favor. We should assume that everyone involved in this story encountered God's grace in different ways. Instead, this statement serves as a reminder that even if we have not specifically prayed for God to act or done anything overtly

righteous, God still sets His favor upon His people when they live according to His design. God does not expect all of us to be priests (or involved in vocational ministry), but He does expect us to live as decent humans who engage in daily life as His people.

Found for the Impossible

// Luke: 1:34–38

This passage highlights two main ideas that should be considered as we seek to live as godly individuals.

First, we should actively seek to honor God in every way that we know how. Mary knew the value of protecting her virginity. Zechariah and Elizabeth are both described as righteous individuals who lived according to "all the commandments and requirements of the Lord" (1:6). We should expect Zechariah and Elizabeth to be described this way since they were from priestly families who had access to Scripture.

It would have been unlikely for Mary's family to have owned personal copies of the various Old Testament scrolls. The average family could not afford to own such copies. Instead, they would have heard the words of Scripture during public readings at the various festivals, in the local synagogue, and when rabbis were teaching in public settings. It is possible that one of the Old Testament laws that Mary might have been familiar with is found in Deuteronomy 22:13–21. Understood properly, Deuteronomy 22:13–21 was designed to encourage both men and women to cherish their virginity as a gift from God. Mary was definitely a woman who put the heart of this law into practice.

Mary's familiarity with this law might also explain her response to the angel in Luke 1:34. She was already engaged to Joseph, and any biological son of Joseph would have been able to inherit "the throne of his father David" (1:32). Therefore, it is curious that Mary does not respond with, "Okay, I will make sure to name the first son that I give birth to, Jesus." Instead, Mary responds as if she was being accused of breaking her engagement by violating a portion of Deuteronomy 22:13–21. Mary knew that the words of Gabriel would happen

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immediately and that there is only one natural way for a woman to give birth to a child. She questioned how she would be able to accomplish God's will without breaking God's law. This is where the second idea comes in. We should expect God to help us when we fall short in our own abilities and understanding.

Gabriel explained to Mary that God would create a child within her in a supernatural way that would resolve her concerns. Gabriel's concluding statement that "nothing is impossible with God" would have caused Mary to recall the story of Sarah in Genesis 18:14, where God stated the same to Abraham. This phrase then finds itself repeated several other times in biblical history (see Jeremiah 32:17, 27; Matthew 19:26; Luke 18:27). God will always help his faithful servants find a way to overcome the impossible. We might sometimes struggle to see God's plan at work, but we must trust that He has a plan that is working things out for our good and the redemption of the world.

CAN YOU RECALL A STORY FROM THE LAST FIVE YEARS WHERE GOD DID SOMETHING IMPOSSIBLE?

DID YOU KNOW?

Mary's question in Luke 1:34 is provided with an appropriate response that reminds her that she is God's servant. She then trusts in God's plan and wants God's will to be done. Her question reminds us that we can ask genuine questions of God. This is sometimes discouraged in religious circles. God might not always provide us with the answer that we want, but He will respond in some way if we are genuine. The answer might come years later or after much study. The answer might not be provided until we join Him in Heaven. Sometimes, the question doesn't bother us as much as we learn to listen to God's word. Psalm 34:8 says to "taste and see that the Lord is good." The only way for someone to taste something is for them to try it. God will not respond to insincerity. Those who accept God's invitation to come to His table and eat, will have plenty of time to ask Him questions that will be matched with compassionate, deliberate, and loving responses.

Biblical Truth: God responds to honest doubts, questions, and concerns.

Is there something about God or His plan that you have always wanted to know?

LIVE IT

What aspects of your life might you be neglecting?

The birth of Jesus occurred because God predestined the details of history. He selected the various people, times, and locations for the birth to occur as He planned. We don't have God's ability to make everything work the way we want, but we can walk out our future based on God's leading. We should never think that any task is unimportant if we know that it is from the hand of God.

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- **Consider.** Write down one daily task that you could give more of your time. Pray that you can see God's hand at work in completing this task.
- **Sort.** Perhaps there are some tasks that you no longer need to do. Maybe you can pass these on to someone else. You might find that your life is better without this task.
- **Admire.** Like the honey example provided in this session, think of one other natural feature of the world that helps you admire God's goodness. Share this feature with someone.

DAILY READINGS

1. WHEN GOD CALLS SOMEONE UNEXPECTEDLY // LUKE 1:26-29

Nazareth was small, quiet, the kind of place people passed through without a second glance. Yet God sent Gabriel there. He found Mary, young, unmarried, living the kind of ordinary life that rarely makes history. Nothing about her circumstances suggested what God had already set in motion. God was not looking for someone impressive. He was looking for someone willing. Mary offered Him both humility and trust, and that was all He required. If God could choose Nazareth, He can choose you. Our family origin, education, or socioeconomic status do not limit God's ability to use us. Ordinary can become extraordinary in the hands of God.

Your address has never been a ceiling on God's calling.

2. FAVOR THAT CANNOT BE EARNED//LUKE 1:30-33

"You have found favor with God." Favor is not a prize awarded to the perfect. It is grace, given freely to those who simply yield. Mary was not chosen because she had it all together. She was chosen because she was available and deeply trusting. That distinction matters far more than most realize. In hospice rooms and in church pews, the same quiet confession is heard repeatedly: "Why would God use someone like me?" From exhausted caregivers to seasoned ministers, the question never fully goes away. The answer is always the same: grace. God does not call the qualified. He qualifies the called and sustains them faithfully all the way through. Do not shrink back from His hand upon your life.

God's favor always comes with His faithfulness.

3. WHEN THE IMPOSSIBLE KNOCKS//LUKE 1:34-38

Mary asked, "How can this be?" She had not known a man, yet the angel declared she would carry the Son of God. Gabriel did not offer a blueprint, only a promise: The Holy Spirit will come upon you. Hospice chaplains have sat at bedsides where medicine ran out of answers and family members

stood in stunned silence. What steadied those families was never a strategy. It was the sustaining presence of God. Mary's courage was not in grasping the miracle. It was in trusting the One performing it. "See, I am the Lord's servant." That is not weakness dressed as surrender. That is faith standing at full height.

God is not waiting on your understanding, He is waiting for your "yes."

4. THE GOD WHO DOES THE IMPOSSIBLE //JEREMIAH 32:17; LUKE 1:37

Gabriel did not whisper that to Mary. He declared it. Jeremiah had already said it plainly: nothing is too difficult for the Lord. Both men were describing the same God, speaking across centuries with the same certainty. Belief and trust are not the same thing. Many believe God can. Trusting that He will, for us, in this situation, is where faith gets costly. Pastoral caregivers have stood in rooms where the prognosis was final and watched God rewrite the conclusion. People have entered hospice care and left having found peace they had spent a lifetime searching for. That is not sentiment, it is a testimony.

Whatever you are carrying today, bring it to the God who forms life in impossible places.

5. A HEART THAT SAYS YES //LUKE 1:38; ROMANS 12:1

Mary did not negotiate. She did not ask for a contingency plan. She simply opened her life and let God in. Surrender is the hardest discipline in the Christian life, and the most necessary. Early in ministry, a seasoned pastor declared that the safest place a believer can stand is in the center of God's will. That truth is heard in the moment, but it takes years of pastoral care, clinical chaplaincy, and watching people face death with remarkable peace before it is understood fully. God's will is rarely comfortable. It is, however, trustworthy. Mary discovered that. When you release your grip on outcomes and yield to His purpose, you do not lose control.

Is there a "yes" in your heart today?

BEFORE YOU TEACH

Preparation

As you prepare to study your lesson, meditate on these three words, "God with Us". Think about God's phenomenal promise that He will never leave us nor forsake us, (Heb.13:5). Pray for an increase of spiritual insight to gain personal connection to the lesson. Reflect on how God chooses ordinary people for remarkable purposes. He loves us so much, He does not just watch over us, God came to be with us.

Extraordinary Faith

Remind learners that Jesus didn't have an ordinary conception, He was conceived by the Holy Spirit. This was an extraordinary, non-biological conception designed by God. Encourage learners to see the wonder, fear, and growing faith of Mary's heart. Invite the group to think about how they would have responded if there were Mary? There will not be another immaculate conception, but God makes request of us daily to respond in faith to His love and call.

LOOK BACK

As we begin to focus on the study about Jesus's holy conception, let's pause and reflect on the previous study, "The Evidence of Forgiveness." Invite four to six learners to share a personal testimony of how they may have demonstrated forgiveness in action. Collectively celebrate the testimonies. Remind students that God has and continues to forgive us daily; therefore, we should be able to forgive others with ease.

TEACHING PLAN

INTRODUCTION

ASK: Reflect and discuss the following questions: "Has anyone ever asked you to do something that you didn't quite understand? How did you respond? How did it impact your life?"

EXPLAIN: Today's study revolves around Mary's point of view. Charged with an extraordinary assignment from God the Father, she was perplexed with being chosen to give birth to the Son of God. Even in a moment of uncertainty she answered, yes to her purpose!

As we investigate the incarnation of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, God being with us will always entail personal assignments every day. Our challenge is to be faithful enough to say yes with great confidence, knowing that He is with us.

TRANSITION: Share **The Point: "Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit and called holy from the beginning"** and the **Session Question: "What should we understand about how Jesus came into the world?"**

PACK ITEM: Display **Pack Item 1, "Jesus, God with Us"** poster, to introduce the major theme of this study, along with the focus of each session.

PACK ITEM: Make copies of **Pack Item 2, the "Jesus, God with Us Memory Verses"** handout, and distribute to the group to help them memorize Bible verses that will help them see how Jesus is always with us.

DIG INTO THE TEXT

Found as a Virgin // Luke 1:26 – 29

READ: Invite a volunteer to read Luke 1:26 – 29.

EMPHASIZE: Point out that Mary was approached by the angel, Gabriel who was sent by God. Mary was not only a virgin but engaged to Joseph, a descendant of King David. He shared that she was favored by God and the Lord was with her.

ASK: "What situations or circumstances cause you to doubt God's ability to redeem the world? (Learner Guide p. 13)

EXPLAIN: Remind the learners that Mary's cousin, Zechariah's wife and John the Baptist's mother, Elizabeth, were said to be barren and well beyond childbearing years. However, she was already six months pregnant when Mary was approached by

THE POINT: JESUS WAS CONCEIVED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT AND CALLED HOLY FROM THE BEGINNING.

the angel, Gabriel. This was a divine connection.

DISCUSS: Read the paragraph from the learner's guide that says, "God was not only concerned with the proper timing, but He also worked with the proper people" p. 13. The same angel approached Zechariah (v.19) about his wife, Elizabeth, being with child in which he illustrated doubt (Luke 1:18). This information indicates that God was already at work before Mary was even aware of her assignment. Two women with child, one a virgin, and the other passed the years of conception; both women are reflections of miracles.

Found with Favor // Luke 1:30 – 33

READ: Have a volunteer read Luke 1:30 – 33.

DISCUSS: Read the first paragraph under this section from the learner pages (p. 13) and discuss how the angel found Mary.

GUIDE: Use the commentary (p. 105) to provide background information. "God chose Mary from Nazareth, a godly virgin, to bear His Son." This was an illustration of how Mary was chosen with intentionality; she was a fitting vessel for such a divine purpose. Her obedience and virginity fulfilled prophecy.

PACK ITEM: Display **Pack Item 3 "Jesus's Birth and Early Childhood"** map to show the areas Mary and Joseph's journey and Jesus's journey to Jerusalem.

GUIDE: Use the commentary (p. 105) to provide background information. Zechariah and Mary both had questions, however, Zechariah had disbelief in his questioning, while Mary made room for a miracle to happen by trusting in God. Mary's submission or fiat (let it be done), made her favorable in the eyes of God.

OBJECT LESSON: Use the Object Lesson on (p. 104). Emphasize the Virgin Mary's ability to follow the direction of God's Holy plan without full clarity.

SUMMARIZE: When God is in it there is no limit! We should always remember not to limit ourselves and think in doubt (Rom 4:20-21). Doubt brings

about disbelief and resistance. Responding in faith allows wonder to lean in, focusing more on possibilities.

Found for the Impossible

// Luke 1:34 – 38

READ: Ask for a volunteer to read Luke 1:34 – 38.

ASK: "What was noticeable about Mary's response to being chosen to conceive the Son of God?" What in the text made it evident that God can do all things and nothing is impossible with God?

EXPLAIN: Use the commentary (p. 105) to explain the conception of Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit."

DISCUSS: Lead the group on a discussion on how, Mary showed faith over fear in her response to the angel, Gabriel, even though she wondered, she accepted her assignment standing on faith.

EXPLAIN: Mary wondered how she could be pregnant if she has never been with a man. Faith doesn't mean you don't have questions. Jesus came into this world by way of a virgin, which is not ordinary. This surpasses all human comprehension (Luke 1:35). He met us up close and personal by choosing to live as us. He's Emmanuel, "God with us", (Matt 1:23). It took Mary's faith and obedience for him to come into this world. Full details weren't necessary, just trust and a yes, (Luke 1:38). The birth was intentional and purposeful.

ASK: "What should we understand about how Jesus came into the world?"



PACK ITEM 1



PACK ITEM 3



PACK ITEM 2



OBJECT LESSON

DO: Bring a blindfold for adults.

GUIDE: What is a blindfold generally used for, (e.g. pinata, games)? Ask: "Who is willing to be blindfolded?"

DO: Place the blindfold on a volunteer. Have a volunteer take a couple of careful steps guided by your voice to obtain an object in the room.

EXPLAIN: "Having faith is not about complete visibility, it's about trusting in the voice of God no matter the circumstance." Mary was a willing vessel, even in ambiguity, (Luke 1:38).

CHALLENGE: In every season of your life, fully put your trust in God and show faith over fear even when you may not see the big picture.

CLOSE THE SESSION

ASK: "Where do you currently see your faith and trust in God?"

SAY: "Check your faith and trust temperature. Do you believe God can do the impossible in your life? The next time God gives you a charge, remember it's your, Mary moment. Don't look through a self-lens instead look through God's lens. Tell God even if you don't completely understand, the answer is YES! "For nothing will be impossible with God (Luke 1:37)."

PRAY: "Lord, thank You for sending your Son to this world for an amazing purpose. Help us to have faith and trust in You even in times we are unclear and don't understand. We place all things in Your hands. In Jesus precious name, Amen

COMMENTARY

LUKE 1:26-29

Connection to the Point: God laid the groundwork for His Son to be born into this world.

Verse 26. The word angel is one of those English words, like deacon and baptize, that early English translators did not really know what to do with, so they did not actually translate the Greek word at all. Instead, these early translators transliterated the Greek word. This means that they replaced the Greek letters with English ones and thereby created a new word—angel. Angels exist to serve God, to communicate His will, to celebrate His perfections, and to call others to celebrate in worship. Gabriel is one of only two angels whose name is given in the Bible. Gabriel's message to Mary was not naïve optimism but confidence in the source of the message—who was God Himself.

Verse 27. While the word "betrothed" is not common in contemporary English, it better captures the nature of this relationship. Mary and Joseph were married in every sense other than sexual intimacy. *House of David*. God had promised that the Messiah would come from the line of David (2 Sam. 7:12-16). By emphasizing that Jesus's father, Joseph, came from David's line, Luke is demonstrating that Jesus was eligible to be the Messiah.

Verse 28. There is nothing in the Bible that tells us that Mary was anything but an ordinary Jewish woman from an ordinary Jewish family. By saying that she was "favored" and that God was with her, Gabriel was telling Mary that God had freely chosen to show her mercy and grace.

Verse 29. Luke's readers would be encouraged by this story because he helped give them certainty by telling the story. However, Mary's personal experience would have certainly been troubling.

LUKE 1:30-33

Connection to the Point: God chose Mary, a godly virgin, to bear His Son.

Verse 30. Gabriel commanded Mary to “not be afraid.” Gabriel’s command to Mary was reminiscent of his words to Zechariah earlier in the chapter (1:13). Similar words would also be spoken by another angel to a group of shepherds in chapter two. Just as Noah had done in the Old Testament, Mary “found favor” with God. Finding favor with God had nothing to do with Mary’s character, behavior, or family lineage. Instead, finding favor with God was a demonstration of God’s unmerited mercy and grace to an undeserving individual.

Verse 31. The birth of Jesus is often referred to as the virgin birth, and faithful Christians have always affirmed the virgin birth as both historically factual and theological essential. The fact that Mary gave birth to Jesus in the ordinary way is part of the miracle of the incarnation. Jesus is both fully God and fully man—including being born, but not conceived, in the ordinary way. The name that Gabriel gave to Mary to use for her firstborn son was the same as the name Joshua in the Old Testament. It means, “The Lord (Yahweh) saves.”

Verse 32. This phrase, Son of the Most High, is simply another way of saying “Son of God.” The phrase Most High God does not mean that other gods exist. Instead, “Most HighHighest” simply means that God is greater than the so-called gods of other nations. Jesus is the Son of the one and only true God.

Verse 33. Jesus is Lord of the Gentiles, too. Jesus is not a tribal or local deity who cares only for a specific people group or region. His Kingdom extends to all places, among all peoples, for all times. At the end of time, some from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation will worship King Jesus (Rev. 7:9-10).

LUKE 1:34-38

Connection to the Point: God’s Son would be conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Verse 34. Even though Mary was likely a young woman, she was well aware of how babies come into the world. She did not mock, reject, or push back on the angel’s prophecy about her conceiving and giving birth to a child. Instead, she responded with a logistical question about how that could happen. Mary responded with wonder and inquiry.

Verse 35. The phrase about the Holy Spirit coming on Mary here is similar to the phrase in Acts 1:8. In Acts, Jesus promises His disciples that the Holy Spirit will come upon them. In both cases, the power of the Holy Spirit is what allows the people to accomplish the mission assigned to them by God. While the New Testament will refer to the people of God as being sons and daughters of God, Jesus is the one and only Son of God. Believers are adopted into God’s family (Rom. 8:15; Eph. 1:5). Jesus is the only one who is the Son of God by His very nature. The virgin birth reveals His distinction as the Son of God, but Jesus has been the Son of God for all eternity.

Verse 36. Elizabeth is Mary’s cousin who had, earlier in the chapter, been given the amazing news that she would become a mother in her old age. By appealing to the miracle of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, Gabriel is showing that God can do things that the world says are impossible.

Verse 37. “Nothing will be impossible with God.” This phrase has been used and abused by people throughout history. Peddlers of the so-called prosperity gospel (which is no gospel at all) will use this verse to “name it and claim it” when it comes to material prosperity. However, this kind of application is not how the Bible appeals to God being able to do anything.

Verse 38. The Greek word translated “servant” here could also be translated slave. The word here conveys not simply someone who serves someone else but someone who is wholly and completely dedicated to carrying out the wishes of his master. Mary was entirely committed to doing God’s will.

Note: Additional commentary can be found at you.lifeway.com.

JESUS, GOD WITH US

The only way to salvation is through Jesus Christ; therefore, it's important that we have a firm understanding of who Jesus is. From His eternal nature to His conception as a human being, our Savior, and His sinless life that proved He was who He said He was and is, the Bible confirms Jesus's full deity and humanity. Understanding these essential truths will help us surrender to Him, live godly lives, and lead others to follow Him also.

THE LIFESTYLE OF A WITNESS

Our daily actions, attitudes, and choices reflect our faith and influence others. Witnessing isn't just about sharing words—it's about living in a way that consistently points others to Christ. By examining what Scripture has to say, we can better understand our responsibility as believers, address barriers that get in the way of sharing our lives and stories and position ourselves to be used to carry the message of Christ to those who need to hear.

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