

# Gabriel's Birth Announcement to Mary

## Luke 1:26-38

- A. Gabriel dispatched; greets Mary (1:26-28).
- B. He offered comfort based on good news (1:29-33).
- C. Gabriel explained how this can be (1:34-38).

A. Gabriel dispatched; greets Mary (1:26-28).

1. (vs. 26) “Now” the timing of the event was “in the sixth month,” not of the year, but rather of Elizabeth’s pregnancy (vs. 36). She had just come out of her “seclusion for five months” (vs. 24).
  - a. It was at this point that in heaven above, “the angel Gabriel was sent from God”
  - b. to a certain earthly destination, “to a city in Galilee called Nazareth,”
  - c. (vs. 25) “to a virgin (παρθένον),” a controversial and essential fact re: the Messiah’s birth (Is. 7:14;



- c. (cont.) Mt. 1:23-25; re: Jeconiah in Mt. 1:11; Jer. 22:30; Jn. 8:41).
- d. This virgin was “engaged (ἐμνηστευμένην, lemma, μνηστεύω - mnēsteuō)” from the Greek mng. “woo and win, betroth,” and “Betrothal often took place shortly after puberty. Consequently Mary may have been a young teenager at this time. During betrothal a man and a woman were considered husband and wife even though they lived apart and did not have sexual relations. Only divorce or death could terminate the betrothal, and



- d. (cont.) from then on society considered them widow and or widower” (Constable). Her fiancé was “a man whose name was Joseph,” and he was necessarily descended from “David,” as Jesus’ legal father by way of adoption as is shown in Matthew’s genealogy (Mt. 1:1-16; cf. Lk. 3:23 – cf. “as was supposed, the son of Joseph”).
- e. “and the virgin’s name was Mary (Μαριάμ),” more literally, “Miriam,” as was common in the OT (15 times for Moses’ and Aaron’s sister). It was a very common name in the NT with a total of



- e. (cont.) “six, including this one. The others include “Mary the wife of Clopas” (Jn. 19:25); “Mary Magdalene” (Jn. 19:25 et al); Mary the mother of John Mark (Ac. 12:12); Mary the sister of Lazarus (Lk. 10:38-42); Mary a Roman Christian (Rm. 16:6).
- f. When Gabriel came in, “he said to her, ‘Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you,’” meaning, He is actively and approvingly involved in your life. The Greek word for “greetings (Χαῖρε)” is a happy one, implying well-wishing for the recipient “to be in a state of happiness and well-being, rejoice, be



e. (cont.) glad” (BDAG). “Favored one (κεχαριτωμένη),” means, “to be graced.” In its only other NT use in Eph. 1:6, it refers to “God’s great favor, with which he favored us through his beloved (Son)” (BDAG). The NASB translates that verse, “to the praise of the glory of His grace (χάρις - charis), which He freely bestowed (χαριτόω - charitoō) on us in the Beloved.” We have been lit., “graced with grace.” So also, Mary was caused, “to be the recipient of a benefit, (mng.) bestow (a) favor on, favor highly, bless.”



- B. Gabriel offered comfort based on good news (1:29-33).
1. (vs. 29) Mary's response: She was confused and was thinking it over as to its meaning.
    - a. The text says, "But she was very perplexed (διεταράχθη) at *this* statement," the Greek means, "confuse, perplex (greatly)" (BDAG). Vine says, "to agitate greatly." In English, perplex means, "unable to grasp something clearly" (Web.). Vs. 12 has the root, "ταράσσω" (tarassō) – Zacharias was "troubled," but he was in worse shape than Mary as, "fear gripped him."



- b. “and” Mary “kept pondering what kind of salutation this was.” The Gk. for “pondering” is the root of our word “dialogue” – a talk betw. two people, but Mary had her own series of thoughts going silently, “as if having an internal discussion on a topic,” (LRL) trying to answer the question of the meaning of this “salutation” or “greeting.”
- 2. (vs. 30) Gabriel said to her:
  - a. “Do not be afraid, Mary” – He knew she was afraid and that using her name offered additional calming.



- b. A fundamental reason for being calm follows: “for you have found favor (χάρις - grace) with God,” similar to Noah in Gen. 6:8 who, “found grace in the eyes of the Lord” (NKJV). Mary was chosen as a special recipient of divine grace. Having already received grace (vs. 28) with commensurate behavior, she was in line to receive more grace (2Cor. 9:6-15; Jn. 1:14-17).
- c. (vs. 31) Gabriel called for her attention, “And behold”; he then announced some utterly amazing things, “you will conceive (συλλαμβάνω) in your



- c. (cont.) womb (γαστήρ) and bear (τίκτω) a son, and you shall name Him Jesus.” There is no explanation here as to the meaning of His name as in Mt. 1:21b, “you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.” Very likely, Luke’s readership knew the meaning of that name.
- d. (vs. 32) More good news: “He will be great,” just as was said about John the Baptist (vs. 15), “and will be called the Son of the Most High,” God, that is, in keeping with OT prophecy (Is. 9:6). Mary likely understood the significance the term, “Son.”



d. (cont.) BK says, “The fact that her Baby was to be called the ‘Son of the Most High’ pointed to His equality with Yahweh. In Semitic thought a son was a ‘carbon copy’ of his father, and the phrase ‘son of’ was often used to refer to one who possessed his ‘father’s’ qualities.” Jesus meant nothing less than that when He said, “I and the Father are one” (Jn. 10:30). When Jesus inquired as to why they wanted to stone Him, they said, “For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make



- d. (cont.) Yourself out to be God” (10:33). Jesus did not try to correct them in their understanding that He was presenting Himself as God because He *was* God (cf. 10:34-38). It comes as no surprise to those familiar with OT prophecy that, “the Lord God will give Him (this Son to be born) the throne of His father David” (2Sam. 7:12-16; Ps. 89:3-4, 28-29; Is. 9:6) – *not* His present throne (Rv. 3:21).
- e. (vs. 33) Notice the length of His reign: “and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end.” We often *correctly*



- e. (cont.) think of the millennial reign of Jesus Christ on the earth in person – “thousand years” seven times in Rv. 20:2-7. But that is just the first phase of the eternal kingdom (2Sam. 7:13, 16; Ps. 89:36, 37; Dn. 2:44; 7:14, 18, 27; Mt. 28:18).
- f. If the thrones get confusing, perhaps the GNTC on Rv. 3:21-22 can help. “Every believer who overcomes by keeping Christ’s works until the end of his earthly life (cf. 2:26) will rule with Christ forever (‘sit with Me on My throne’). Christ was obedient to the end of His earthly life and was



f. (cont.) rewarded with a share in His Father's throne. In the same way, He promises those believers who overcome a share in His eternal throne (cf. Matt 25:21, 23; Rom 8:17b). Initially these faithful believers will rule with Christ on earth for a thousand years during the millennial kingdom (cf. Rev 20:6). Throughout eternity they will reign with Christ on the new earth (cf. 21:10–11; 22:1–2).”



C. Gabriel explained how this can be (1:34-38).

1. (vs. 34) In faith, Mary asked a reasonable, common-sense question: “How can this be, since I am a virgin?” She was not asking *whether* it would really happen, but *how* it would come about if no man was involved in the normal way of human reproduction.
2. (vs. 35) Gabriel was happy to respond, recognizing the integrity of her question, rather unlike his response to Zacharias who did not believe him (vs. 20). So here is how it would happen:
  - a. “The Holy Spirit will come upon you” – probably



- a. (cont.) unseen, unfelt, & unheard,
  - b. “and the power of the Most High will overshadow you” – again, probably unseen, unfelt, & unheard – There is nothing of the *perverse* notion of sex with God here.
  - c. “and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God.” Clearly, He is not just another child born to a Jewish family on earth. He is “the only begotten Son,” that is, the unique, one-of-a-kind Son of God – God in human flesh (Jn. 1:14).
- Notice that all three members of the Godhead are



- (cont.) active in this verse; the Holy Spirit, the Most High (the Father), and the Son in the process of becoming man, the incarnation.
- 3. (vs. 36) Gabriel adds this story to encourage Mary further. It was news to her: “And behold, even your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age” – a miraculous event otherwise impossible; “and she who was called barren is now in her sixth month” of pregnancy, that is.
- 4. (vs. 37) A profound declaration follows: “For nothing will be impossible with God.” More



4. (cont.) literally; “because not undoable with God is every (spoken) word,” that is, “for God will never be powerless to fulfill any prophecy.” That is what this section is about – fulfilled prophecy, both re: John the Baptist and Jesus the Messiah. This is not surprising really, since God, “gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist” (Rm. 4:17b).
5. (vs. 38) This was enough to satisfy Mary’s curiosity of “How can this be, since I am a virgin?” Now *she* calls for Gabriel’s attention: “Behold, the bonds slave



5. (cont.) of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word (ῥῆμα – same term as in vs. 37).” His mission was accomplished, “And the angel departed from her.”



Conc.

There is a sense in which Luke 1 covers everything from here to eternity, from the forerunner, John the Baptist, to the coming Messiah, Jesus, who saves His people from their sins, to the establishment of His millennial reign all the way through to the eternal kingdom when the new heavens and earth are established. As godly minded people we have everything to look forward to and nothing to fear, since we know that God is able and will fulfill every prophecy.