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A0552 – December 25, 2005 – Luke 1:26-38 – The Birth Of The King

On this blessed day we proclaim and celebrate the Birth of the King into the world.

Galatians 4:4-5 when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, ⁵ so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

The reason God sent forth His Son was because the whole world is under sin and through His Son there might be redemption for those who believe in Christ, the Son of the living God. One of the most remarkable passages on the Birth of the King is found in Luke's Gospel. Luke's contribution is significant because he was a physician and as such quite interested in the details of the virgin birth. He was also the author of the Book of Acts. The unique thing about the Gospel of Luke is that Luke set out to give the consecutive order of the facts surrounding the birth, life, death, and resurrection of the King.

Luke 1:1-4 Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us, ² just as they were handed down to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, ³ it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write *it* out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus; ⁴ so that you may know the exact truth about the things you have been taught.

His reason for giving a consecutive order of the facts is so that Theophilus would know the exact truth about the things he had been taught. In all probability Theophilus was a high Roman official who had heard disturbing reports about Jesus and as a result, Luke sought to set the fact straight in this inspired document.

Luke begins his work by giving an account of the prophesied birth of Jesus' forerunner, John the Baptist, who would go before the king and prepare His way (Matt. 3:3; Mk. 1:3; Lk. 3:4; Jn. 1:23).

Isaiah 40:3 A voice is calling, "Clear the way for the LORD in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God.

John's mission to "clear the way for the Lord" involved a ministry of "repentance" in preparation for the King.

Matthew 3:1-2 Now in those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, ² "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

The nation was to "repent" or "change their mind" about the kind of repentance necessary to enter the kingdom of heaven. The kind of righteousness was not that which could be earned by human works but a righteousness that surpassed that of the scribes and Pharisees and which came through faith in the one who followed John's footsteps (Matt 5:17-21). With a righteousness that comes through faith they would be fit to enter the kingdom of heaven (aka the earthly Davidic or Millennial Kingdom). But before all this could get under way, Luke explains the events surrounding Jesus' birth into the world of men.

Luke 1:26-38 Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And coming in, he said to her, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord *is* with you." ²⁹ But she was very perplexed at *this* statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this was. ³⁰ The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. ³¹ "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall 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 and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end." ³⁴ Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵ The angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God. ³⁶ "And behold, even your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age; and she who was called barren is now in her sixth month. ³⁷ "For nothing will be impossible with God." ³⁸ And Mary said,

"Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

Gabriel's Visit to Mary (1:26-38)

- A. Gabriel's Announcement (1:28)**
- B. Mary's Response (1:29)**
- C. Gabriel's Message (1:30-33)**
- D. Mary's Question (1:34)**
- E. The Angel's Answer (1:35)**

I. Gabriel's Visit to Mary (1:26-38)

- A. Introduction of Joseph and Mary (1:26-27)**

Luke 1:26 Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of the Galilee which is called Nazareth²⁷ to a virgin having been betrothed to a man named Joseph from the house of David and the name of the virgin was Mary.

Elizabeth had been carrying John the Baptist for six months when *the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of the Galilee which is called Nazareth*. The year is 6/5 BC and Jesus was born in the winter about a year later in 5/4 BC, one to two years before Herod the Great's death in 4BC. You'll remember that Herod was an antichrist, Satan's instrument to kill the baby Jesus and keep redemption from the world (Matt 2:1-12). Yet not even Satan has the power to thwart God's purposes. And this *angel Gabriel was sent (apostello) from God to a city of the region of Galilee which is called Nazareth*. *Nazareth* was the city of Joseph and Mary before they were married. It was from *Nazareth* that they went up to Bethlehem to be counted in the census. When they were warned that Herod would kill all the babies under 2 years of age they went to Egypt. After Herod died (4BC) they returned to *Nazareth* where Jesus did the rest of His growing up. Nathaniel first rejected Jesus because He came from *Nazareth* saying "Can anything good come from Nazareth?" (John 1:46). Throughout the gospels Jesus is referred to as "*Jesus the Nazareth*" and "*Jesus the Nazarene*". When Jesus was crucified on the cross the inscription read:

"Jesus the Nazarene, the King of the Jews" (John 19:19)

Nazareth had a bad name but it was from *Nazareth* that world redemption came.

At this time Joseph and Mary were *betrothed*. In the Jewish culture a man and woman would be *betrothed* to one another for a period of time before the consummation of the marriage. This betrothal was much stronger than an engagement period today. The two were considered man and wife except they were not permitted to live together. If any unfaithfulness occurred during the betrothal the offending party was put to death. It was for this reason that Joseph intended to put Mary away secretly when he discovered she was pregnant.

Joseph was *from the house of David* which means he was a descendant of King David. We know from Matt 1 that he was a descendant of *David* through Solomon. *The name of the virgin was Mary*. *Mary* was also of the house of David but she was a descendant of David through Nathan. At this time *Mary* was a *virgin* (*parthenos*) which refers strictly to “one who has never engaged in sexual intercourse”¹. She was not just a young girl but she was a *virgin*. This was necessary to fulfill Isaiah’s prophecy:

Isaiah 7:14 Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.

B. Gabriel’s Announcement & Mary’s Response (1:28-29)

Luke 1:28 And when He had come to her he said: “Rejoice, favored one, the Lord is with you.”²⁹ But the word deeply troubled her and she wondered (imperfect middle) what sort of greeting this is (present active optative).

Gabriel’s announcement to *Mary* was that she should *rejoice* for she is the *favored one and the Lord is with* her. It was every Jewish woman’s desire to give birth to the Messiah. It was for this reason that boys were desired over girls. *Mary* had found *favor* with God as evidenced by this special honor being bestowed upon her. *Gabriel’s* sudden appearance and announcement *troubled her greatly and she wondered what sort of greeting this was*. She did not yet know for what reason she was *favored* but she was about to find out.

C. Gabriel’s Message (1:30-33)

Luke 1:30 and the angel said to her: “Do not fear, *Mary*, for you (singular) have found favor with God.”³¹ And behold you will conceive (collect with) in womb and give birth a Son and you shall call His name *Jesus*.³² He will be great and will be called Son of the

Most High and the Lord God will give to Him the Throne of His father David, ³³ and He will rule over the house of Jacob forever and His kingdom will not end.”

Gabriel’s message begins with a word of comfort, ***Do not fear, Mary, for you have found favor with God.*** The special honor bestowed upon Mary is that she ***will conceive in the womb and give birth to a Son.*** Both the ***conception*** and the ***birth*** are mentioned here as certain. The name of the Son is given by the angel ***Gabriel*** as ***Jesus.*** ***Jesus*** or ***Joshua*** means “the Lord is salvation”. “And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). She is favored in that she will carry in her womb and will give birth to the salvation of the world! She is God’s chosen receptacle to bring forth that which was promised in the presence of Adam, Eve, and the Serpent in the garden (Gen 3:15); the crushing of the seed of Satan, the propitiation of God’s wrath, the redemption from the slave market of sin, the reconciliation of the world. He is the deliverer from sin past, present and future and evermore all things will be to His glory.

Verse 32-33, ***Gabriel*** predicted five things of her Son Jesus.

1. ***He will be great.***
2. ***He will be called Son of the Most High***
3. ***The Lord God will give to Him the Throne of His father David***
4. ***He will rule over the house of Jacob forever***
5. ***His kingdom will not end***

He will be great. Only here is He called the ***great*** One. ***He will be called Son of the Most High.*** The word ***Most High*** (*hupistos*) translates the Hebrew *elyon* and the significance could not be missed by Mary. Her baby would be equal with YHWH. Indeed, in verse 76 John the Baptist is said to be “the prophet of the Most High” and that he would go on “before the Lord to prepare His ways”. So, the ***Son of the Most High*** is ***Jesus*** and ***Jesus*** is the ***Lord*** (*kurios*).

Luke 1:76 "And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; For you will go on BEFORE THE LORD TO PREPARE HIS WAYS;

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 or attributes (BKC). We are reminded of this in the following discourse of Jesus with His apostles.

John 14:8-9 Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." ⁹ Jesus said to him, "Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father;

Jesus is a "carbon copy" of His Father. *Son of the Most High* does not make Jesus less than *the Most High* but equal in every respect to Him. God is one in essence but three in person. The phrase *son of God* (v 35) always refers to His deity while *son of man* always refers to His humanity. He is the God-man, eternally God and forever man. He is the second Adam. The first was born of the virgin dust of the ground, the second of the virgin Mary. Both born sinless and both without a sin nature; only one, however, succeeded in carrying out His mission and only one will fulfill the dominion mandate of a Theocratic Kingdom, governed by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself!

Third, *the Lord God will give to Him the Throne of His father David*. This is in fulfillment of the OT promise made to David.

1 Chronicles 17:10-14 Moreover, I tell you that the LORD will build a house for you. ¹¹ "When your days are fulfilled that you must go *to be* with your fathers, that I will set up *one of* your descendants after you, who will be of your sons; and I will establish his kingdom. ¹² "He shall build for Me a house, and I will establish his throne forever. ¹³ "I will be his father and he shall be My son; and I will not take My lovingkindness away from him, as I took it from him who was before you. ¹⁴ "But I will settle him in My house and in My kingdom forever, and his throne shall be established forever."

This passage speaks of a distant son of David and four promises are made regarding Him

- An everlasting house (i.e. dynasty)
- An everlasting kingdom
- An everlasting throne
- An everlasting Person (I will settle Him in My house forever)

As a descendant of David through Nathan, Mary qualified to give birth to David's distant heir, the Messiah who would sit on David's throne. This will ultimately be fulfilled in the earthly Millennium when Jesus returns to reign over all the nations. Jesus does not now sit on the earthly throne of David but on the heavenly throne of His Father (Rev 3:21).

Fourth, ***He will rule over the house of Jacob forever. Jacob*** was re-named Israel by God (Gen 32:29). In order for Jesus to ***rule over the house of Jacob forever*** He must be an everlasting Person in fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant (1 Chron 17:10b-14). Thus, this baby Jesus is an everlasting Person who ***will rule over the house of Israel forever***. He will begin to reign as Israel's King in the Millennium and will continue to be her King in the New Heaven's and New Earth.

Lastly, ***His kingdom will never end***. Mary must have been reminded of the promises to David (1 Chron 17:10b-14). The kingdom that would be ruled by a future son of David would be an everlasting kingdom. Mary now knows for certain that the Son she will conceive and give birth to will be the fulfillment of David's Covenant in this kingdom.

Isaiah 9:7 There will be no end to the increase of *His* government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.

David will have an everlasting house because His dynasty will end in an everlasting person. David will have an everlasting kingdom because His kingdom will never be destroyed. David will have an everlasting throne because His throne will be established forever. God will make all this certain because He will settle Him in His house forever.

D. Mary's Question (1:34)

Luke 1:34 But Mary said to the angel: "How is this, since I do not know a man?"

Mary does not seem surprised that the Messiah was to come. She fully expected it. What she was surprised about was that she would be His mother because she was a virgin. The Greek literally says, ***"How is this, since I do not know a man?"*** Mary simply wants to know the details of how this can take place since she had never had sexual intercourse. The virgin conception and virgin birth are the first context in which we should teach our children about sex. Sex is not a dirty thing. Sex is a gift of God for procreation, enjoyment, and intimate companionship. The virgin conception and birth form a non-threatening, non-dirty introduction to purity and sex within marriage. I believe this is the starting point for teaching our children about chastity and sex within marriage. It is certainly not the public school classroom. If you wait till a child is 7-8 it will be too late because they will have already picked up far more than you can imagine about sex and they will already have inherited ideas that are totally contrary to biblical thought from

their friends and television. I mention this to save your children and to help you make the decision as to when to start talking to them about purity and sex.

E. The Angel's Answer (1:35)

Luke 1:35 And answering, the angel said to her: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you and power of the Most High will overshadow you and for this reason the holy begotten one will be called Son of God...³⁷ For nothing will be impossible for the word of God."

The angel's answer is a tremendous one. It will not be by natural means that she conceives the Messiah but by supernatural means. This should have been expected since God had already laid down the example of Isaac's miraculous birth and the virgin birth prophecy in Isa 7:14. How this virgin conception took place was by ***The Holy Spirit*** coming ***upon*** her ***and the power of the Most High*** overshadowing her. The virgin conception is a work of the third person of the Trinity. The Holy Spirit would creatively bring about the physical conception of Jesus. This miraculous conception and Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ was necessary because of His deity and pre-existence. By way of this creative work Jesus Christ avoided a sin nature so He could qualify to die on the cross for our sin. The word ***overshadow*** is "a figure of a cloud coming upon her...Here it is like the Shekinah glory which suggests it (Ex 40:38) where the cloud of glory represents the presence and power of God."ⁱⁱ God's omnipresence and omnipotence secured the miraculous begetting of one who would be called ***Son of God***. Son of God refers to His deity. He is a "carbon copy" of His Father because He and the Father are One (John 10:30). And He is the very radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature (Heb 1:1-3). He is not the son of Joseph but his step-son because Joseph was of the line of Coniah/Jeconiah and his lineage, though from David was cursed (Jer 22:24-30).

Jeremiah 22:24-30 "As I live," declares the LORD, "even though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah were a signet *ring* on My right hand, yet I would pull you off; ²⁵ and I will give you over into the hand of those who are seeking your life, yes, into the hand of those whom you dread, even into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and into the hand of the Chaldeans. ²⁶ "I will hurl you and your mother who bore you into another country where you were not born, and there you will die. ²⁷ "But as for the land to which they desire to return, they will not return to it. ²⁸ "Is this man Coniah a despised, shattered jar? Or is he an undesirable vessel? Why have he and his descendants been hurled out And cast into a land that they had not known? ²⁹ "O land, land, land, Hear the word of the

LORD! ³⁰ "Thus says the LORD, 'Write this man down childless, A man who will not prosper in his days; For no man of his descendants will prosper Sitting on the throne of David Or ruling again in Judah.'"

The Messiah could not be Joseph's natural son because it would violate God's word. Thus, another reason God used a virgin birth was to avoid contradicting His word. So, Jesus is of the line of David through Mary as prophesied but not through the cursed line of Coniah. The orchestration of God, the artistry of God is marvelous when one attempts to figure in all the details that went in to bring such an event about.

Jesus Christ is the gift that God has given to the whole world. Christmas is not first of all what we give to others. It is first of all what God given us; His Son. We love because He first loved us (1 John 4:19). Jesus *is* "the reason for the season", as cliché as it may sound. In America today there are a whole slew of people attempting to erase this wondrous gift and to undermine the exclusivity of the biblical message. If there is some other way of salvation besides Jesus Christ then His death was not necessary and nor was His birth or God's purpose in sending Him into the world. But the word of God says there is no other way.

John 14:6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.

In place of "Merry Christmas" American's suggest Happy Holidays. In place of Christmas trees it is kwanza bushes or Allah plants. The unrighteous will do all they can to erase the name of Christ but it is their names that will be erased from the book of life. Christ died for all that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life (John 3:16). God is pleased with His Son. The only issue that remains is whether you are satisfied with His Son. Will you receive the gift God has so graciously provided? *Jesus of Nazarene, the King of the Jews* died for you according to the Scriptures, He was buried and He rose again on the third day according to the Scriptures. After this He appeared to more than 500 (1 Cor 15:1-4). Will you receive the gracious gift of salvation that God offers (John 1:12-13)? Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved (Acts 16:31).

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ⁱ BAGD.

ⁱⁱ A.T. Robertson.