

## The Savior's Birth Announced - Part 2

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*Luke*

By Richard Caldwell, Jr.

**Bible Text:** Luke 1:26-38

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Luke chapter one is where we will be studying this evening. Luke chapter one. And we will begin reading with verse 26.

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be.

And 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 bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to 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."

And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?"

And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For nothing will be impossible with God."

And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.<sup>1</sup>

Let's ask God's blessing on our study tonight.

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<sup>1</sup> Luke 1:26-38.

*Father in heaven, we now lift to you, to your throne of grace this time we have in your Word together. We offer it to you through prayer and we ask your blessing. May your Spirit who gave us this book be at work in our striving to explain it and in our striving to understand it and may your Spirit apply it to each one of us in a way that changes us, in a way that pleases you. Lord, help us to give you tonight our full attention, to eagerly desire to be taught tonight, to eagerly desire to grasp the things you have revealed in Scripture. Lord, we also pray for those in our midst who need Jesus tonight, who don't know him. We pray for their salvation. And we will thank you, Lord, for what you do and for what you accomplish in souls. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

The angel Gabriel has been sent to Galilee unto a little village called Nazareth to deliver news to a young virgin girl named Mary that she is going to be the mother of the Messiah. And this morning as we began looking at this section we focused on the messenger from God in verses 26 and 27. We focused on when he came, six months after Elizabeth conceived. We focused on where he came. We talked about the province Galilee. We talked about Nazareth and how this is the most humble scene anyone could ever imagine. This would have been shocking for those who were expecting the Messiah. And we talked about to whom he came, a virgin.

I read this week William Barclay's commentary on Luke, this particular section, his commentary on this particular section. And Barclay is great in terms of information from the standpoint of history, but some of what he says is not orthodox. And one of the things that he mentioned in his commentary is that the Church does not require, the church he belonged to did not require anyone to believe in the virgin birth. And so he gave some evidence for the virgin birth and he gave some evidence for those who hold to a theological position that there really wasn't a virgin birth as if the issue doesn't matter.

Well, let me just tell you. It does matter. If Jesus had a human father and a human mother, if he was born from Joseph and Mary then he was not the Son of God. He came to a virgin, a virgin betrothed to Joseph. Her name is Mary.

Tonight we are going to pick up in verse 28 and we are going to begin to examine the message that he delivered to her. Notice what it says, verses 28 through 33.

And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be.

And 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 bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to 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."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Luke 1:28-33.

Several ways we can describe this message. First of all, it is a message of grace. It is an announcement of spectacular grace that has been given to Mary. Notice the blessing she receives as the angel makes his entrance into her home, verse 28.

“And he came to her and said, ‘Greetings...’”<sup>3</sup>

Literally that is “rejoice.” “You rejoice” is literally how it reads in the Greek text. “You rejoice, oh favored one. The Lord is μετὰ (met-ah’). He is with you.”

It is cultic, it is idolatrous what the Roman Catholic Church has done with Mary. Mary is not a dispenser of grace. Mary is not a co-redemptrix. She didn’t help redeem us. Mary has never received a single prayer or answered, helped bring to pass the answer to a single prayer. It is not Mary full of grace, it is Mary who has been made the recipient of God’s grace.

And she understood that. That is why as soon as she received that greeting, verse 29:

“But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be.”<sup>4</sup>

I remind you, again, here is a 12 to 14 year old girl. She is probably not very literate. The Scripture that she knew would have been learned by memorizing Scripture at home, by hearing it read in public meetings. And yet I think—and we are going to see it in the text tonight—I think there is great evidence that this was an unusual girl from the standpoint of maturity and from the standpoint of faith and from the standpoint of a life that was saturated with the Scripture that she had heard and that she had learned. This is an unusual young woman. And if you ask how is it that she is so unusual and how is it that she is being given the greatest privilege that any young Jewish girl could have ever imagined, the answer is the grace of God, the favor of God.

And, by the way, when you talk about grace, always remember it is unmerited. It is not deserved. She hasn’t earned it. It is simply God greatly favoring her. It is God’s grace.

The Lord has favored you. The Lord is present with you. He is with you, Mary.

Now it is interesting to me and I don’t know that there is a real answer to this. It is just interesting to me that her first reaction to this, verse 29, is to contemplate the saying. You would think that her first response would be to contemplate the fact that she is meeting with an angel. But you would think that her first response would be wonder at the fact that she is talking to an angel. But I am reminded that angels are able, by God’s will, to manifest themselves in more than one way. In fact, there have been times in the Word of God where angels were present and men were unaware of it.

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<sup>3</sup> Luke 1:28.

<sup>4</sup> Luke 1:29.

And so I have to think that God fit the manifestation of Gabriel to her age, to her condition so that while she recognized she was conversing with an angel, yet in some way she was set at ease enough that she is actually able to function. She is actually able to think about what she is hearing. She knows something supernatural is going on, because notice what he does say in verse 30.

“And the angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid.’”<sup>5</sup>

And so there is some kind of fear going on and yet this manifestation is fit to the situation and she is able to function and able to think.

The Bible tells us in verse 29 that she was greatly perplexed, which is to say she was confused. Now think about this. You are 12, 13, 14 years old. You are engaged to be married. You have never known a man sexually. You are a virgin. And you are being told that you are going to have a child. And all of this begins by being told that you are greatly favored. The Lord is with you.

Why is the angel here? Why is he greeting me like this?

So she is perplexed. She is confused at the greeting.

And then notice something else. The Bible tells us she is trying to discern it, verse 29, trying to discern what kind of greeting this is.

This turns out to be a real character quality that you find in Mary. She is a contemplative young woman. She is a thinking young girl. She meditates on things. She is one who processes things. In fact, later on, just look over to chapter two real quickly and notice verse 15.

When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.”

And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart.<sup>6</sup>

And that is what she is doing right away. She is trying to process this. He eases her fear in verse 30.

“Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found...”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Luke 1:30.

<sup>6</sup> Luke 2:15-19.

<sup>7</sup> Luke 1:30.

Grace, literally. You have found grace with God. The Lord is pleased with you.

So the first thing we could say about his message is it is a message of God's grace.

Second, it is a message of salvation. What is this grace all about? Why are angels appearing all of the sudden? Remember, I told you earlier when Gabriel makes his appearance to Zechariah it has been 500 years since an angel appeared to anybody. It has been 400 years since God gave special revelation through a prophet. It has been about 800 years since a season of the miraculous where miracles are almost commonplace with Elijah and Elisha... this is not someone who is experienced with the miraculous. This is not someone, in Mary, someone who has seen something like this before. Why is all this beginning to happen with Zachariah, with Mary? Because the Lord is doing something new and wonderful, the fulfillment of prophecy. The sun has risen. The Son of God is about to arrive in the earth. And all of that has to do with our redemption. It has to do with salvation.

Verse 31.

“And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus.”<sup>8</sup>

Transliterating the Hebrew name יְהוֹשֻׁעַ (yeh-ho-shoo'- ah), Joshua, Jehovah is salvation. Just as the angel gave John his name, the Lord drew the angel, so the Lord assigns this name. His name will be Jesus, which is to say he will be the Savior.

Matthew 1:21.

“She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”<sup>9</sup>

God's grace to her, but also God's grace to all of us and the grace that is being revealed is the grace of salvation, the grace of redemption.

The third part of this message is this is a message of... we could describe it this way: divine dominion or messianic dominion.

Verse 32.

He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to 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.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Luke 1:31.

<sup>9</sup> Matthew 1:21.

<sup>10</sup> Luke 1:32-33.

Remember Mary is pondering these things. She is processing this. And I fully believe, I think we will see evidence of this in a moment. I fully believe she is tracking with Gabriel. This has to be unbelievable to her, but she understands what she is being told. She understands that something miraculous has to happen. She understands this is not going to be a baby conceived between her and Joseph. She understands that there is the fulfillment of the Word of God going on right here in her home.

She must have known, for example, Isaiah 9:6.

For to us a child is born,  
to us a son is given;  
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,  
and his name shall be called  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.  
Of the increase of his government and of peace  
there will be no end,  
on the throne of David and over his kingdom,  
to establish it and to uphold it  
with justice and with righteousness  
from this time forth and forevermore.  
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.<sup>11</sup>

There is going to be one who comes who will sit on the throne of his father David who will rule over a kingdom, who will establish it and uphold it with justice and righteousness and it will be everlasting. And this is what he is telling her about the baby that is to be conceived in her womb. She is going to give birth to a son and he will be great.

Verse 32.

“He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High.”<sup>12</sup>

עליון (el el-yone') in the Hebrew text, in the Old Testament, most high God, עליון (el el-yone'). And when you see that name it is in reference to the fact that God is the possessor of heaven and of earth. He is sovereign. He gave birth to everything. He created everything and he sustains and rules over everything. And this one who is to be born from her will be called the Son of the Most high.

“And the Lord God will give to 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.”<sup>13</sup>

And if she heard that she knew. She had to know. This is the promise of Messiah.

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<sup>11</sup> Isaiah 9:6-7.

<sup>12</sup> Luke 1:32.

<sup>13</sup> Luke 1:32-33.

Remember John was prophesied to be great in the sight of God. But this word concerning Jesus is he will be great. That is, great without qualification, great in and of himself. The Son of the only true God, the most high God and yet at the same time the Son of David and an everlasting ruler.

How would God fulfill the promises made to David and the covenant that he had made with David? How is God going to do this? With someone who is both God and man. The wonder of the incarnation. God taking to himself a sinless, perfect, human nature so that he is the Son of the most high and he is going to sit on the throne of his father David.

2 Samuel chapter seven verse eight.

“Now, therefore, thus you shall say to my servant David, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be prince over my people Israel.’”<sup>14</sup>

Remember we talked about this morning how God does great things in humble places and makes great use of humble people and even in the case of David, where did he find him? From the pasture he took him, following the sheep, and made him prince over God’s people Israel.

And the Lord went on to say:

And I have been with you wherever you went and have cut off all your enemies from before you. And I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may dwell in their own place and be disturbed no more. And violent men shall afflict them no more, as formerly, from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel. And I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.”<sup>15</sup>

And while some of what the Lord related there can be applied to Solomon, an everlasting kingdom cannot. And David’s throne being established forever cannot be fulfilled by

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<sup>14</sup> 2 Samuel 7:8.

<sup>15</sup> 2 Samuel 7:9-16.

Solomon. No, this is someone else who is going to come. There is a prefillment, sort of, an early picture of it in God's faithfulness to Solomon, but beyond Solomon's time there is one who is coming who is going to sit on the throne of his father David forever. And it is being announced to Mary right here. This will be your son. This is the one to be conceived in your womb.

So we see the messenger and we see the message. This raises a question, verses 34 through 37. How in the world is this going to be?

Verse 34.

“And Mary said to the angel, ‘How will this be, since I am a virgin?’”<sup>16</sup>

As I told you this morning, literally in the Greek text there, “Since I know not a man, since I haven't known a man.”

How will this be?

“And the angel answered her, ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God.’”<sup>17</sup>

Stop there for a moment. Mary's mind is turning. She doesn't understand. But I want you to notice that what she says here is different from what Zechariah said. Zechariah is wondering how is this going to happen in the sense that he doesn't believe it. He can't believe the Word of God. Mary's struggle is not that she doesn't believe what she is being told. This is not, “Well, I think this is impossible.” No, this is a biological question. She is asking about how it is going to be accomplished. And notice she immediately understands the angel is not talking about a child to be conceived by her and Joseph. There has got to be something else done here and so she is wondering how. How will it happen?

And so the Lord tells her through the angel. How is it going to happen? Well, first of all, he said:

“The Holy Spirit will come upon you.”<sup>18</sup>

It is going to happen through the presence of God. The Holy Spirit who was the original agent in creation would be the agent of creation this time in the womb of Mary.

Genesis 1:2 says:

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<sup>16</sup> Luke 1:34.

<sup>17</sup> Luke 1:35.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.



“The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.”<sup>19</sup>

When God was bringing into existence all that he has created, the Holy Spirit was active. He was the agent in that original creation. And now the human nature of Jesus and this union with divine nature accomplished in the womb of Mary, this is going to be the work of the Spirit of God, the creative work of the Spirit of God. And sort of to amplify this he says it in another way, saying the same thing, but he says it in another way.

“The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.”<sup>20</sup>

The transfiguration, remember, when Jesus was there. Peter, James and John are present and he is transfigured before them. In Luke 9:34 it says:

“As he was saying these things, a cloud came and overshadowed them.”<sup>21</sup>

Same Greek word.

“...and they were afraid as they entered the cloud.”<sup>22</sup>

How will this be accomplished? In your womb, Mary. It will be the work of the Spirit which is also to say it will be the result of the power of God.

Overshadowed, the idea is to be enveloped, to be surrounded. And, by the way, there is nothing sexual implied here. The pagans had concepts of gods and women and sexual encounters. There is nothing like that here, nothing like that anywhere in Scripture.

No, this is just a miracle, something God does in her womb. And it is beyond our comprehension. It is beyond our ability to fully understand. But notice something. Because it is the work of the Spirit and because the most high will overshadow you.

Notice, again there, the most high, the all powerful, fully sovereign God. He is going to be active in this and because that is true, therefore, verse 35, because this is true:

“...the child to be born will be called holy.”<sup>23</sup>

That means this is the most unique child ever conceived in a mother’s womb.

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<sup>19</sup> Genesis 1:2.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Luke 9:34.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

How many of you know tonight that though your children were born sweet, they weren't born holy? In fact, one of the greatest challenges we will ever face as parents is to take these little depraved ones and by God's grace lead them to faith in the Savior.

But this one, this one is going to be a holy child. In fact, his nature can only be explained in one way. He is, end of verse 35:

“...the Son of God.”<sup>24</sup>

Though he will be Mary's son, though he will be known as Joseph's son, a carpenter's son, though Joseph was not his biological father, though he will be known as the Son of David, the time that is most appropriate in this context for what is being explained to her, she needs to know this is going to be the Son of God.

God will become a man in the person of Jesus, the God man. How will this be? The answer is: The Lord will do it.

And then God does something very gracious for this young girl, verse 36. He gives her an anchor for her faith. She is not doubting. She is not... she is believing. But God... she didn't ask for a sign, but God graciously gives her one.

Verse 36.

“And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren.”<sup>25</sup>

She bore that reproach, Elizabeth the barren one. That is how she was known, Elizabeth the barren one. Well, guess what? She is not barren anymore. She is six months pregnant. Though she was barren and though she was past the age for conceiving and bearing children, she is going to have a son.

Notice something, verse 37.

“For nothing will be impossible with God.”<sup>26</sup>

Where have we heard that before?

I want you to keep your Bible marker here. I want you to go to Genesis chapter 18. I am going to sort of speed ahead. The Lord appears to Abraham along with angels, two angels and in verse nine notice this.

Verse nine.

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Luke 1:36.

<sup>26</sup> Luke 1:37.

They said to him, “Where is Sarah your wife?” And he said, “She is in the tent.”

The LORD said, “I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife shall have a son.” And Sarah was listening at the tent door behind him.<sup>27</sup>

Wives did that then, too, right? Listen on in their husband’s conversations.

Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in years. The way of women had ceased to be with Sarah. So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, “After I am worn out, and my lord is old, shall I have pleasure?”

The LORD said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh and say, ‘Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?’ Is anything too hard for the LORD?”<sup>28</sup>

What is the opposite of asking, “Is there anything too hard for God?” What is the opposite of that? If we are going to say it positively, how would we say it? There is nothing impossible with God.

So that even as this news—go back to Luke chapter one is being delivered to Mary and, listen. Any young Jewish girl would have known the account of Abraham and Sarah and Isaac. She knew this. So here her faith is being stationed not only on the sign of Elizabeth having conceived, but on the Word of God as her mind is taken back to what happened with Abraham and Sarah. There is nothing impossible with God.

Now notice something wonderful here.

“And Mary said, ‘Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.’ And the angel departed from her.”<sup>29</sup>

The Roman Catholic Church has referred to Mary, many have and the church has the queen of heaven. Well, there is no queen in heaven, right? There is just a king. But if you were to ask Mary how we should view her, she tells us right here. How does Mary view herself?

By the way, before you read that, notice something in verse 47. Look down there if you would. As she begins to give praise to God—and we will get to this later—as she visits Elizabeth she begins to give praise to God:

And Mary said,  
“My soul magnifies the Lord,

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<sup>27</sup> Genesis 18:9-10.

<sup>28</sup> Genesis 18:11-14.

<sup>29</sup> Luke 1:38.

and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior...<sup>30</sup>

Look. You don't need a Savior unless you are a sinner. No, Mary is a sinner. She needs a Savior. Look back at verse 38. How does she understand herself?

“Behold I am the...”

δουλη (doo'-lay), slave, bond slave, the feminine form of that word. I am the bond servant, the servant, the slave of the Lord. I am a slave. However, you would choose to use me, Lord, whatever you would choose to do with me, Lord, that is your will. And may your will be accomplished. I am just your slave.

Now interesting to think about and we will get to this when we get to what has been referred to as the *Magnificat* when we get further into this text and you hear Scripture pouring out of this young girl.

As I told you earlier, I believe she was Scripture saturated and I think right here is another example, because if you think of some famous instances in the Old Testament where women were barren and then God gave them children you have Sarah. That has already been referred to in the statement earlier. Nothing is impossible with God.

What is another well known instance in the Old Testament where a woman desired to have a child, poured out her heart to God for a child and God granted her request. Who comes to mind? Hannah.

I want you to see something. Go to 1 Samuel chapter one verse nine. Now this is after Elkanah her husband ... let's just begin with verse eight.

And Elkanah, her husband, said to her, “Hannah, why do you weep? And why do you not eat? And why is your heart sad? Am I not more to you than ten sons?”

After they had eaten and drunk in Shiloh, Hannah rose. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat beside the doorpost of the temple of the LORD. She was deeply distressed and prayed to the LORD and wept bitterly. And she vowed a vow and said, “O LORD of hosts, if you will indeed look on the affliction of your...<sup>31</sup>

In the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew text it is δουλη (doo'-lay), the same word used in our text in Luke. And notice she doesn't refer to herself that way once.

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<sup>30</sup> Luke 1:46-47.

<sup>31</sup> 1 Samuel 1:8-11.

“...if you will indeed look on the affliction of your servant and remember me and not forget your servant, but will give to your servant a son, then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life.”<sup>32</sup>

Hannah considered herself the maidservant of the Lord and here Mary refers to herself as the maidservant of the Lord. What must have been going through her mind even from the Old Testament as she is hearing these things, the promises made by God. Nothing is impossible with God, reflecting back to Abraham and Sarah and Isaac. And now she responds in a biblical mindset and says, “I am your maidservant.” This is her sense of identity. This is how she thinks of herself, a slave, so that she responds this way.

We are back in Luke now, 1:38.

“...let it be to me according to your word.”<sup>33</sup>

Now, folks, this is powerful to me in my mind, because her response is, “I am your slave. Let it happen.” And we don't have to go very far into the New Testament to discover this meant problems for her. And when Joseph first gets the news that she is with child, he is shocked and he is thinking about how am I going to handle this? And he decides, because he loves her and because he is an honorable man, he is going to put her away privately. He is going to divorce her.

But this was going to be a major issue. But do you notice? She never asked a single question like: Well, who is going to explain this to my parents? Who is going not explain this to his parents? Who is going to explain this to Joseph? Who is going to protect me from what might be said about me?

She doesn't ask anything like that. She simply says, “I am the Lord's slave. Let it be according to your Word.”

And if you don't think that there was some doubt created in the minds of especially wicked people, remember how Jesus was insulted in John 8:41 when Jesus said to the religious leaders of their day:

“Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God.”<sup>34</sup>

I can't help but contrast this with how we are many times. We come face to face with what the Word of God says we should do and right away we are filled with thousands of questions.

Yeah, yeah, yeah, but you don't understand. You don't understand my situation. You don't know what I have been going through. You don't know what this might mean for

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<sup>32</sup> Luke 1:11.

<sup>33</sup> Luke 1:38.

<sup>34</sup> John 8:41.

me. You don't understand how unhappy I might be. What about this? Who is going to protect me from this? Who is going to save me from this outcome?

No, no, no. Listen. I am the Lord's slave. Let it be according to your Word.

You see, that should be our response. And it was done.

“And the angel departed from her.”<sup>35</sup>

We see that God's promises are always performed. What is happening now with this outbreak of the miraculous is all of those promises God made in the Old Testament and all of those years that have passed since they first began to be given. And it may have seemed to many as though they would never be performed. They would never be fulfilled. Now it was actually happening.

We understand, don't we, that everything has been promised to us living in this dispensation, in this age, all those promises concerning the fact that our Savior is coming again, we are going to see him face to face, there is going to be a great resurrection day. We... he will come and take us to be with him where he is and forever we will be with the Lord. Do you we understand that as real as we are present here tonight there is going to come a day when everyone of those promises God brings it into being?

And how we ought to be living in light of those realities. We are reminded today all day as we have looked at this text that God's promises, he performs them, but often times he accomplishes what he determines to do through his humble, willing, obedient slaves.

And I just ask if that is you and if that is me. Are we those humble, willing, obedient slaves? Is Mary's sense of self identity, is that yours? Honestly, friend, do you say to yourself tonight, would you say not only to the Lord, but in your own heart, “I am your slave”?

We have been studying that in Bible study, haven't we? Is that your sense of identity? I am the Lord's slave? Whatever he wants to do with me, however, he wants to use me, wherever he wants to send me, however he wants to afflict me, if that is to be to the glory of... for the glory of his name, let it be done according to your Word.

But then let us not forget that God's promises are always accomplished by the power and the activity that he supplies.

We say, “Lord, let it be according to your Word.” And then what he does. He works. And we just have this unbelievable favor of being a part of what God accomplishes.

Who is Mary? Just a humble young 12, 13, 14 year old girl who knew the Lord, loved the Lord from an out of the way place, a nondescript place. But she was given grace and she gets to be a part of the greatest thing we could ever talk about tonight. And we get to be a

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<sup>35</sup> Luke 1:38.

part of this unimaginable ministry called the ministry of reconciliation. God has saved us and now he uses us to make his good news known to the world. We are his slaves. Let us rejoice in that privilege. Amen?

Let's pray together.

*Father in heaven, wherever we have not been living with that very sense of identity, please correct us tonight. Wherever we have forgotten that we have been purchased with a price and not just any price, but with the precious blood of your Son so that we no longer belong to ourselves. We are not our own. Wherever we have forgotten that, correct us tonight, Lord. I pray that our way of thinking about our... the remainder of our life on this earth, I pray it would be revolutionized so that we would really see ourselves as your bondservants ready to do your will, rejoicing as your will is done no matter what it means for us, that we would see that we exist for your glory and that it is our joy to serve that end, however it is your choose to make it happen. We thank you for the example of Mary, the example that you made a reality and we thank you even more for our Savior that you sent your Son into the world, that he stepped out of heaven of his own volition and came into this world to save us from our sins. We love him. We are so grateful we belong to him and we desire to spend our lives serving him. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*