



The Announcement

LUKE 1:26-38

JASON BRODEHL

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	2
Approaching the Christmas Season	2
With Anticipation?.....	2
With Anxiousness?.....	2
With Avoidance?.....	2
Advent	3
Anticipating the Savior	3
From The Messenger (26-27)	3
In The Greeting (28-33).....	4
In the Message (31-33)	5
His Name.....	5
His Greatness.....	6
His Sonship.....	6
His Throne.....	6
His Kingdom	6
In Her Reply (34)	7
In the Means (35-37)	7
In her response (38).....	7
Reflect and Respond	8
Our Announcement	8

THE ANNOUNCEMENT

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Pastor Jason Brodehl

INTRODUCTION

We can never know about the days to come
But we think about them anyway
And I wonder if I'm really with you now
Or just chasing after some finer day
Anticipation
Anticipation is making me late
Is keeping me waiting

Sound familiar, anyone? These are the lyrics to a popular song from the 1970s sung by Carly Simon. As some of you may know, the song was “Anticipation.” According to one source, she wrote the song while waiting for a first date with Cat Stevens. He was running late, and to burn off nervous energy, she started playing her guitar and quickly wrote the words and music before he arrived. The song was about anticipating his arrival yet not knowing whether the relationship would last. In the piece, she relates uncertainty with anticipation for the moment.¹ Ironically, the Oxford English Dictionary defines anticipation as “being aware of and preparing for (a future event), regarding as probable, thus, looking forward to” it.²

APPROACHING THE CHRISTMAS SEASON

WITH ANTICIPATION?

We are entering the season of anticipation, aren't we? I am sure if I polled the children in this room, many, if not all, would say they are anticipating or looking forward to Christmas with a level of excitement. And why? For the gifts they will receive.

WITH ANXIOUSNESS?

For parents, it may not be a season of anticipation but more of a season of anxiety. Family obligations, stressful activities, gifts, travel, and so on loom ahead like a dark cloud.

WITH AVOIDANCE?

Yet, others are looking to avoid the coming holiday. It may bring sadness, loneliness, and maybe painful memories. Maybe it's the first holiday without a loved one. Where are you this morning? Are you approaching Christmas with anticipation, anxiety, or avoidance?

¹ <https://www.songfacts.com/facts/carly-simon/anticipation>

² Soanes, Catherine, and Angus Stevenson, eds. 2004. In [*Concise Oxford English Dictionary*](#), 11th ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

ADVENT

This is the season of Advent. This message marks the first for December leading up to Christmas. The term Advent means “coming of” or “arrive.” Regardless of where you are this morning, let’s take a moment to direct the eyes of our hearts toward the Christmas story. The birth of the Messiah. Before we begin, let’s pray.

ANTICIPATING THE SAVIOR

Here is the summary of the message this morning:

God announces what He will do before it is done to encourage us in our walk of faith, so anticipate God’s faithfulness.

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We see this pattern from the very beginning of Genesis.

- God told Eve the serpent crusher would come from her seed, and it did.
- He warned Noah of the coming flood and told him to build an ark. The rain came, as did the flood waters.
- He called Abraham and said he would make him a great nation, and He did.
- He promised him he would have a child even though his wife was beyond childbearing years. They had Isaac.
- He informed Abraham about the Egyptian captivity. We have the book of Exodus.
- He told Moses He would use him to deliver His people. And He did.
- He also told him another prophet was coming after him, one that would speak all that God commanded him. Jesus was the final prophet.
- And He told him how his people would fail His covenant, and they did.

And the list goes on and on. The entire Bible is a story of anticipation. For us today, we have the entire canon, the whole story of redemption, from creation to consummation. We may not know the exact details everything, but we all that we need to know to live the life of faith. But this morning, we will hear of God’s plan of redemption with a certain level of precision.

FROM THE MESSENGER (26-27)

Turn with me to Luke chapter 1. Our text this morning comes from the gospel of Luke and he tells us the reason for his narrative in the first paragraph. Luke had followed closely the things concerning Jesus for some time, and his intent was to write an orderly account that you may have CERTAINTY concerning the things you have been taught. Keep this in mind as we go through the passage this morning. Follow along as I read verses 26-27.

²⁶ *In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth,* ²⁷ *to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary.*

Our passage begins with the angel, Gabriel. It's important to note first that he was sent from God. It's easy to get sidetracked thinking that the words Gabriel says are his words. But, we need to remember as we go through this passage that Gabriel is a servant of God. Gabriel goes when and where God tells him to go, and he says what God tells him to say.

It's interesting too, that Luke clarifies which angel it is that is bringing the message. This is not Gabriel's first appearance on the scene of God's plan. He is mentioned another time in scripture in the book of Daniel. I won't be able to go into the details of his appearances, nor in the details of Daniel chapter 9 from which I am referencing. To summarize the situation, Daniel is seeking the Lord God by prayers and pleas for mercy because of the sin and rebellion of Israel which has exiled them to Babylon, away from their land and away from the temple. While Daniel is praying and pleading for mercy, Gabriel comes to bring him insight and understanding. He tells Daniel he is greatly loved, and he talks about a time coming "to put an end to sin, to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, And the coming of an anointed one, a prince." It is not a coincidence, then, that Luke would want to draw our attention back to the Old Testament and the context of mercy and atonement.

Note the mention of "In the sixth month." Before this story of Mary, the angel Gabriel appears to a priest, Zechariah, in the temple and brings good news that his prayer has been heard, his wife will bear him a son, John, who will make ready for the Lord a people prepared. Unfortunately, Zechariah's wife, Elizabeth, is too old to conceive, and Zechariah doubts the message Gabriel delivers. But in verse 19 of this chapter, Gabriel responds to Zechariah's doubt with, *"I stand in the presence of God and I was sent to you and to bring you this good news."* (Luke 1:19) God sent Him with the message.

Back to our story with Mary. Luke shares that the angel was sent to a humble, backwater town in Galilee called Nazareth to a specific young woman, Mary, who is a virgin. Remember, names matter. Do recall Nazareth's reputation? When Jesus calls Philip, he grabs Nathanael and says, "We have found the person Moses and the prophets wrote about! His name is Jesus, the son of Joseph from Nazareth." And Nathanael responds with, "Nazareth! Can anything good come from Nazareth?" (John 1:45-46) It's ironic, in a way, that John the Baptist's announcement came in the Temple, but Jesus' announcement, the savior of the world, God's own son, comes to this woman in this place. It's not the way we would have written the story I'm sure.

And Mary is engaged to a man named Joseph, who was of the lineage or genealogy of King David. We are again pulled back to the Old Testament and the promises God made to David, Israel's first king, from the tribe of Judah.

IN THE GREETING (28-33)

It begins with a special greeting to Mary. Follow along with me in verses 28-30.

²⁸ And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" ²⁹ But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰ And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.

Do you hear what troubled her? It wasn't Gabriel's appearance. It wasn't even the fact that an angel was talking to her. It was his greeting. What was it about the greeting that troubled her? He said, "for you have found favor with God." I wonder if she brought back to the first man who is mentioned to have found favor with God, Noah, a story of the deliverance of a family from the judgment of God.

But Gabriel encourages her. "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God." Have you ever wondered why Mary? People have hypothesized many ideas to explain God's choice of Mary. Some even claimed she was without sin or that she never had any relations with Joseph. But scripture refutes those claims. Jesus had brothers and sisters of whom Mary was their mother. In response to sinlessness, God's Word refutes that claim too. For it says no one is righteous, no not one (Ps. 14:1-3; 53:1-3; Ro. 3:10). We all sin and fall short of the glory of God (Ro. 3:23), and that includes Mary. The question should be why does God find favor with anyone?

I don't know why God does what He does or chooses whom He chooses. But this is what I do know, *God chooses what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; what is weak to shame the strong; what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are,* ²⁹ *so that no human being might boast in the presence of God (1 Corinthians 1:27-29).* He chose Mary out of His sheer mercy and grace as with us.

IN THE MESSAGE (31-33)

Let's move on. Once again, we see God doing the unthinkable by choosing an undeserving maiden to fulfill His plan of redemption. Here comes the astounding pre-birth announcement. One that will change the world forever. Let's read on from verse 31.

³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. 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, ³³ and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

I don't have the time to exposit every phrase in this announcement. Each one deserves its own message. So, I will dip into a few of these proclamations. First, His name.

HIS NAME

If you have children, you understand the privilege of naming your child. Some spent hours searching books or websites for the right name. As a former classroom teacher, I acted as judge and jury of the names Lori presented. You know what I mean if you spent time teaching in a classroom. Certain names conjure up, well, let's say, unpleasant memories. But you don't have to be a parent to understand this. What's one of the first questions you ask when someone gives birth? The gender and name. Names matter, they're important.

Mary will not have the privilege of naming her first child because His Father has already given Him a name, and it's Jesus. Mary, you don't know this yet, but His name will bring blessings (Matt 21:9, Mark 11:9). In His name, many will be healed (Acts 3:16). Mary, in His name, the lame will walk. In the name of Jesus, demons will flee (Mark 5:7). Mary, His name will be more excellent even Gabriel's (Hebrews 1:4). Mary, in His name, there is victory, hope, forgiveness, mercy, grace, and most importantly, there is salvation! In His name, He will forgive His people for their sins! Mary, His name will be above every name. And one day, Mary, every knee will bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue will confess that He is Lord to the glory of God, His Father! (Phil. 2:10-11)

HIS GREATNESS

And Mary, that's not all. He will also be great. The world defines greatness by fame, fortune, power, and authority. Now, your son will be known by all creation, for all things have been created by Him and for Him (Col. 1:16) so He owns all things. As for power, He will raise the dead and calm storms (John 11:43, Mt. 8:26). And authority, well, all authority in heaven and heaven will be given to Him (Matthew 28:18). But that is not what will make him great. This will make him great: Although He will be in the form of God, He will not use His Godness and power to proclaim His excellencies. No, rather, He will empty Himself by taking the form of a servant and taking on humanity's likeness. And He will humble himself by obeying His Father's every command to the point of death, even death on a cross. He will humbly and perfectly obey every single command of His heavenly Father even though it will cost his life. That's what will make him great!

HIS SONSHIP

And He will be called the son of the Most High. What does it mean to be a son or daughter to your father? It means you resemble your parents' actions, attitudes, and physical attributes. In other words, we image our parents. So too will Jesus be the very image of the invisible God (Col. 1:15). What did Jesus look like physically? We don't know and it doesn't matter. For *he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him.*" Although He will be God's Son, *³He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not (Isaiah 53:2-3).* But will be the one images the character of His Father. Who is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin (Ex. 34:6-7).

HIS THRONE

But that's not all. He will fulfill the promise made to David in 2 Samuel 7. The Lord promised David when he died, he would raise up one of his descendants who would build him a house in his name. Many thought he was talking about Solomon. And in a way, He was. But he, too, was only a shadow of this child. This child will be the chief cornerstone of a living temple built with the souls He saves with his blood. (1 Peter 2:5). In this living temple will sit this child, the forever king after the lineage of King David.

HIS KINGDOM

kingdoms will rise and fall. Leaders will follow leaders. Wars will continue, and men will battle against one another. There will not be peace on this earth for this reason. But Mary, your Son's Kingdom will eventually bring peace; it will never end.

IN HER REPLY (34)

How do you respond to such an announcement? Listen to Mary's response. Let's pick up in verse 34.

³⁴ And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?"

It's easy to read this text and yet miss the implication in her response. I say that because she is about to be married to Joseph, right? So, she and Joseph could get married and then produce a child. That would not be unreasonable to think, correct? Could that not be the child? But obviously, by her response, she believes that is not the case here. Either she understands that she will be impregnated at the moment or very soon. Although maybe it's because of who this child will be, he cannot come from the seed of a man. She knows the child of God must come from God Himself.

Faith isn't blind obedience, as we have been hearing from Hebrews. Faith reasons. It hears, contemplates, seeks answers, and ultimate trusts. Reasoning faith approaches God in humility, seeking answers to questions. Like, O God, how will do this? But that doesn't He will answer you.

IN THE MEANS (35-37)

Although, here, Mary receives an answer to her question. Follow along with me as I pick up verse 35.

³⁵ 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. 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. ³⁷ For nothing will be impossible with God."

The same Spirit that hovered over the chaos at creation and brought order and gave life to every living creature will come into her womb and form her son. He will be the "new" creation. Now, no, He is not "new" or created. For He always existed. He has no beginning or end, for His is the Alpha and Omega. But He will be "new" to this world. No man in the history of creation ever walked on this fallen earth in sinlessness, (for he had no sin nature), in perfect obedience. And because of this, He will be holy. He will be God's Son.

I know it is difficult to believe and Zechariah couldn't believe it. But you will not be alone in this matter. Elizabeth is already six months pregnant with another miracle child.

We, human beings, have done incredible things over the life of this earth. We have landed on the moon, mastered flight, created incredible art, and climbed the highest heights. We can replace joints and transplant human hearts and countless other things. But there two things we cannot do: atone for our sins or conquer death. With man, this is impossible. But with God, all things are possible.

IN HER RESPONSE (38)

With such great news and hope, anticipating the impossible, she responds with great hope.

³⁸ 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.

This is Hebrews 11 faith. Mary receives a word from the angel that comes from the very throne of God. She asks a clarifying question but settles within her heart, the word she received. We don't hear much about Mary for the rest of the gospels. Do you know why? Because it isn't about Mary, the gospel is about Jesus. But what we can gather from her is that we can hear extraordinary things from the word of God and cling to those words even though we may not understand them. This is like Advent. Every week, we come in here to be encouraged and reminded of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We will continue to struggle with sins and temptations, but we return as often as possible to receive encouragement. We need to hear the impossible or inconceivable. And that message is that God still loves us even though we doubt Him, fall into temptations, and seek comfort from worthless idols. With man, this is impossible, but with God, all things are possible, and He is faithful to His promises to His Word. There is hope for all of us this morning.

REFLECT AND RESPOND

OUR ANNOUNCEMENT

Mary had her announcement, but we had ours too. Turn with me to Acts chapter 1. Look down at verse 6.

⁶So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." ⁹And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, ¹¹and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

An angel announced His arrival, and these two men in white robes, i.e., angels, have shared with us that He will return. Do you anticipate His return? There may be three different responses to that question.

One response is that you anticipate His return. You long for Him to come back and make all things new. It may be selfishly motivated, meaning you want to rid yourself of this body of sin and your struggles. Or, you genuinely want to see Jesus, the world's Savior, as He is.

Or, maybe you are not ready for His return. Yes, you know you ought to long for it, but you like your life and are not prepared for Him to return. To you, I say, I've been. I understand. But if God grants you the grace to experience what you long for, you will quickly realize it's not all it's cracked up to be. Those desires will leave you empty in the long run. The goodness of this life you love, is only a drop of the excellencies Christ will bring upon His return.

Then, there is a last category of people who don't believe He will return. All of this seems like a fairytale and maybe even folly. The funny thing about God's Word, is that it is not dependent upon you. It's true whether you believe it or not. It stands on its own apart from anyone's belief. My heart aches for you. Because the day He returns, as glorious as it will be for those who believe, will be more devastating for

you. It will be too late for you. There will not exist another opportunity to believe. Jesus will judge the living and dead.

From the beginning of creation, God told us a serpent crusher was coming. This morning, Gabriel announced His impossible birth. And it occurred. Carly Simon's song, Anticipation, was written with uncertainty. What we have here in the gospel of Luke is absolute certainty. Jesus came as was announced and promised and He will return in the same way he left. Rest assured of that.

We have much to anticipate this coming holiday, don't we? Whether you're a child anticipating the gifts, a parent feeling anxious, or someone looking to avoid the holiday, I encourage you to look away from your current circumstances and situations and look to the heavenly realms. Look to the Word of God and the promises within. And anticipate the day when he returns, for he will make everything new.