

Dec. 16, 2018

# Come Thou Long Expected Jesus

Luke 1:26-45

Part 1

**“The child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God.”**

LTS: Matt. 1:18-25

For Christians, the celebration of Christmas really has the potential to be a God-exalting holiday. As believers we understand that the foundation of our faith and hope of eternal life is bound up in the advent of Jesus Christ. We believe what the Bible teaches; that though man's sin has earned him the wrath of God we can yet find salvation by the grace of God. That grace appeared in the world in the form of a baby. But NOT just any baby. No, this baby was actually deity in humanity come to fulfill God's righteous standards and to bear God's holy wrath. This was His mission, and he would complete that mission as a substitute for every sinner who would believe.

Unfortunately, the true Christmas story too often gets buried under an avalanche of Christmas lights, decorations, wrapping paper, movies, maxed out credit cards, fruitcake, self-indulgence, and greed. But that should be expected, right? We should expect that the enemy of our souls would be determined to do whatever is in his power to divert our affections away from the glory of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

It behooves us, then, to fight for Christmas worship. It is incumbent upon the children of God to reign in our thoughts and our frenetic schedules to set aside time to push all of that stuff out of the way and say again,

Come thou long expected Jesus,  
Born to set thy people free.  
From our fears and sins release us,  
Let us find our rest in Thee.

Jesus is glorified in us when we remember, delight in and rest in His finished work of redemption on our behalf. That's why we are here for this morning, and its why we will be back this evening once again to sing his praises together. As we open our Bible's this morning, more than anything we want to worship Christ.

So, this morning, and then again next week, I want us to focus on the beginning of the Christmas story; the part where we are told that after centuries of waiting for the

coming of the promised Messiah, an angel of the Lord visits an inconsequential village, enters an insignificant home, to tell an unsuspecting bride-to-be that she is chosen to bear the Savior of the world.

Let's begin by opening our Bibles to Luke chapter one. Please stand with me for the reading of God's word

Read Luke 1:26-45

For thousands of years the people of God longed for the day when Messiah would come. The prophets had foretold in many O.T. passages that God would send him to be their Redeemer.

In their own way the Jewish people and their priests repeatedly prayed the same sentiment that we pray in our day, "Come thou long expected Jesus." We pray for his Second Coming. They prayed for his first. And they had prayed so long that some had no doubt lost hope. But now it was time.

As Paul said to the church in Galatia, "In the fullness of time God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law that He might redeem those who are under the law" (Gal. 4:4-5).

In Luke 1:26-27 the story begins to unfold when God's messenger arrives.

## I. The Messenger Arrives (26-27):

1. We know from other Scriptures that around the throne of God stand holy, angels whose sole purpose and delight is to do God's bidding. There are only two that we know by name. One is Michael the Archangel, the great warrior mentioned briefly in Daniel, Jude and Revelation. The other is Gabriel, God's designated messenger, who also appears in Daniel and then twice here in Luke chapter one.

2. Clearly, any message delivered directly by an angel of God must be significant. But it becomes all the more significant when you realize that the people of God had not heard from an angel in over 400 years. But this was the second time in a six-month period that Gabriel had appeared. Clearly, God was up to something!

A. You remember Gabriel first appeared in the temple as Zacharias entered to burn incense at the altar. He came to announce that Zacharia and his elderly wife (who had been barren their whole marriage) would now, in the providential timing of God, have a son.

B. That boy would become the greatest prophet who ever lived, and his name would be John the Baptist.

3. Now we find Gabriel appearing a second time. And to whom? A royal prince? Perhaps the wife of a nobleman of Jerusalem? No! Rather, to a young, teenaged virgin engaged to a humble village carpenter in a little town called Nazareth. A town so insignificant it's never even mentioned in the OT.

4. Two observations should be made from verse 27.

A. First, notice Luke points out that Joseph was a descendent of David. Actually, both he and Mary find their lineage traced back to David. That's important because the prophecies concerning Messiah indicated that He would be born a descendent of David and would therefore have the right to David's throne.

B. Second, notice Luke's description of Mary. She was a "virgin."

### Mary's Virginity

5. There are many liberal theologians in our day who go out of their way to discredit Jesus' virgin birth. But let's be clear on this point: You cannot be a Christian if you deny the virgin birth of Christ! The doctrine of the virgin birth is not only clearly set forth in the Bible, it's an essential element of our faith in Him.

6. One author writes:

No other fact in the Christmas story is more important than the virgin birth. The virgin birth must have happened exactly the way Scripture says. Otherwise, Christmas has no point at all. If Jesus is simply the illegitimate child of Mary's infidelity, or even if He is the child of Joseph's natural marital union with Mary, He is not God. If he is not God, his claims are lies. If His claims are lies, his salvation is a hoax. And if His salvation is a hoax, we are all doomed.<sup>1</sup>

7. The virgin birth of Jesus Christ is an underlying assumption in everything the Bible teaches about Jesus. To jettison the virgin birth is to throw out Jesus' deity, the accuracy and authority of Scripture, and a veritable host of other foundational doctrines of the Christian faith. Everything else the Bible teaches about Christ hinges on what we celebrate at Christmas – that Jesus actually is God in Human flesh. That

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<sup>1</sup> John MacArthur, *God Came Near*, p. 38

truth is just as significant to the validity of our faith in Christ as the truth of His resurrection. It is not optional!

8. Luke clearly establishes Mary's virginity in his account of Christ's conception.

- A. The Greek word Luke used for "virgin" (27) is *parthenos* which means "one who has NOT had an intimate physical relationship with a man."
- B. This term was never used of a married woman. Girls of that day were often formally engaged to be married at around the age of 12 or 13 in a public ceremony to a man of her parents choosing. The couple would spend a year getting to know each other while living separately in the homes of their respective parents. At the end of the year they would be married. Then they would leave their father and mother and come together to begin a life of their own as husband and wife.
- C. Luke makes it clear that Mary and Joseph had entered into this engagement period (betrothal) but that they had not yet consummated the marriage. Verse 34 tells us that after that angel told Mary she would have a son, she responded by saying, "How can this be since I am a virgin?" And Matthew 1:18 reads: "...when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit.

9. Friends, this is amazing! The hope we stand upon today is not some shallow, feel-good invention of modern religiosity. It is the bedrock truth that God Himself came to earth in human flesh to do for us what we could never do for ourselves. Our hope is not in Mary, or Joseph, the wise men, or even an angel from heaven. Our hope is in Jesus Christ, born of a virgin, the very Son of God.

10. And so, Gabriel, the messenger of God, arrives to deliver the wonderful news of God's plan to a poor, humble, bride-to-be in the provincial village of Nazareth.

11. So Gabriel says (28) "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you."

- A. "Favored one" here means one who receives special blessing, kindness, or grace from God. The covenant-keeping Lord of Israel was paying this young lady special attention. She was about to be blessed more than any woman in the history of the world had ever been blessed!
- B. And how had God favored her? He had come to her in a very special way. Gabriel says, "The Lord [Yahweh] is "with you." Not with her nation (Israel), or with her tribe (Judah), or with her family, but specifically and uniquely with her. But she

has absolutely NO idea what is about to happen.

- C. We know that because of what we read in the next verse (29): “But she was greatly troubled at the saying and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be.”

### Mary’s Humility

12. Throughout this passage it’s apparent that Mary’s life is marked with humility. She clearly understands the O.T. Scriptures. The more we study what little has been revealed about her life, the more convinced we are that she was one of those faithful Jewish women whom God has justified by grace through faith.

13. She loved the Lord and sought to live in covenant faithfulness to Him. But she knew (contrary to what the RCC teaches) that she was a sinner. That’s why in verse 47 we find her calling God “my Savior.”

14. Mary was waiting for “the salvation of the Lord” just like everyone else. She didn’t see herself and anything special. So, Gabriel’s greeting and his very presence, left her perplexed, speechless, and filled with a significant amount of fear. At this point in the story she still has no idea what is going on. So, Gabriel explains.

## II. The Message Is Delivered (28-35)

### Mary Find’s Favor

Read 30

1. Gabriel says, “Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God.” There’s that term again, only this time it’s even clearer. “Karis” the word for “favor” here, means “grace.” God has singled Mary out to receive a special gift.

- A. It wasn’t that Mary was intrinsically more worthy than other women in Israel, but that God had sovereignly chosen her for reasons never revealed to us to fulfill a holy and difficult calling.
- B. We should note, however, that God is a God of grace, and on some occasions in redemptive history he has bestows special grace upon a person to accomplish His unique plan for that time.
- C. For example, we can reflect on God’s calling Noah and his family to prepare a way of salvation from the great flood. What was so special about Noah? Genesis 6, simply says, “But Noah found grace [favor] in the eyes of the Lord.”

D. There is nothing new here. God has always poured out His grace upon those He chooses according to His sovereign will. Noah found grace because of God's sovereign choice. Mary found grace because of God's sovereign choice. And people today find saving grace because of God's sovereign choice. It's never on the basis of works done in the body but on God who exercises His sovereign right to choose. Why? So that no one can boast and so that Christ will receive all the glory.

6. Mary had been singled out by God as the one upon whom He would pour out His special favor. So, she had no need to fear.

7. Now Gabriel gets to the main point of his message.

### The Glory of Jesus

Read 31-33

8. Well, if you think Gabriel's greeting jolted Mary and rendered her speechless, imagine how much more shocking these words must have been.

- A. Mary, who was not yet married, is now told that she is going to have a baby, a son, and that she was to name the boy Jesus. Why "Jesus?" Because that name has a special meaning. It means Yahweh Saves, or Yahweh is Savior.
- B. Think about it! Jesus' very name is a prophesy about why he came into the world. He came to save!
- C. All of Israel had been waiting for the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of David who would sit on David's throne and rule forever! Mary would never have dared to think that God might accomplish His coming through her.
- D. But here was Gabriel himself standing in Mary's kitchen declaring that God had singled her out to be the one through whom Christ would be born.
- E. This would be NO ordinary baby. "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; and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and his kingdom will never end." Mary's baby would be the sinner's Savior and King.
- F. Does that not sound like the prophesy of Isaiah 9:6-7,

For unto us a child is born; Unto us a son is given; and the government will rest on His shoulders: and his name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of His peace. On the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this.

9. But now Mary is very perplexed, and finally finds words to ask (v. 34); “How can this be since I am a virgin?”

10. Gabriel immediately explains.

### The True Father of Jesus

Read v. 35

A. This was the fulfillment of another of Isaiah’s prophecies. Isaiah 7:14, “Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel (God with us).

B. He would NOT be called the son of Joseph. He would be the Son of God.

11. Call Him “Jesus” Gabriel said. Because the name Jesus means Savior.

12. Call Him “great”, because history has never seen a man whose influence would so change the world and manifest the glory of God.

13. Call Him “Son of the Most High” for He is both human and divine; a real man and very God of very God.

14. Call Him King, because he will sit on David’s throne as King of kings, and Lord of lords. Before Him every knee will bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

15. What else can we say but “Come Thou Long Expected Jesus!” He is the only sure hope and unshakable confidence upon which modern man can stand in such turbulent days as these.

16. What the world needs today is NOT a new paradigm for societal evolution. The new morality is not going to save us. The push for absolute equality is not going to rescue us. What the world needs today is what the world has always needed. We need a Redeemer. We need a Savior. We need the Wonderful Counselor. We need the one who was fully God and fully man, who lived the perfect life we could never live, and die the death that we deserved. We need to be reconciled to God by grace, through faith in the Person and Work of Jesus Christ.

### Mary’s humble Faith:

17. How did Mary respond to all of this?

Read v. 38

18. Mary's response is, Here I am Lord. Take me. Use me. Do what you will with my life. She didn't demand assurances that everything would work out OK. She understood that the penalty for adultery was stoning. Would anyone really believe that she was made pregnant by the H.S.? Nevertheless, she responded in faith, trusting that the God who called her was faithful to preserve her till the end.

19. What about you? Have you placed all your hope and trust in Jesus? In response to his command to repent of your sins and believe in Jesus, have you responded with the humility of Mary?

“The child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God.”