

## GOSPEL OF THE MESSIAH

### Message 4

Text: Luke 1:26-38

Date: 2/9/2014

INTRO: In these messages on the Gospels we have looked at the introduction of the Messiah to the world, and we are now in the process of the second point, the preparation of the Messiah for the world. From the very last verses of the OT we learn that Elijah would come to prepare the way for the Messiah. And so in our last message we saw in some detail how that prophecy began to be fulfilled in history. We saw that a certain very godly couple, by names of Zacharias and Elizabeth, who were elderly already but still had not child were promised a son by the angel Gabriel.

Let me just mention here, that there is a far and near fulfillment regarding the prophecy of the coming of Elijah and the Lord gave us these prophecies that we might understand them. I just listened to part of a message by Charles Price and he took a kind of Rick Warren stand on Acts 1:7 where Jesus said, "It is not for you to know the times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority." Like Rick Warren, he then said that according to Jesus, understanding what will happen in the future is none of our business. Charles Price has some very good teaching, but that is not one of them. Almost 1/3 of Scripture, I understand, was prophetic at the time it was written. God does not waste words on that which is not our business. And just as surely as God wanted Israel to understand prophecy regarding His first coming, He wants us to understand prophecy regarding His second coming.

So, with regard to the Gospels, having witnessed one miraculous conception in the previous message, we are about to witness another one. Now for the last 16 years or so, I have covered Luke 1:26, where we are today, to Luke 2:38 on Christmas day. I will not repeat all of that but we have many young people who were not even born when I did many of those messages, and some will be repetitious for their sakes.

Now, before we begin this morning, I must familiarize you with the land of Israel in maps.

1. Israel on world map
2. Israel and neighbors

3. Modern Israel

4. Topographical map: Point out where Jerusalem is. Zacharias and Elizabeth lived close to Jerusalem (upper end of Dead Sea and inland on top of mountain). Today we will look at the conception of Christ. Point out where Mary lived (bottom end of Sea of Galilee but inland).

B. Conception Of Jesus Christ (Luke 1:26-56)

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

Our passage begins like this, "Now in the sixth month..." What sixth month? Well, it is the sixth month after Elizabeth conceived. By the way, this is how some try to determine when Jesus was born according to the course of priests that Zacharias was in. But from this we learn that Jesus was six months younger than John.

Well, in the sixth month the angel Gabriel is now sent to Nazareth, a town in the north in the Galilee area. But Gabriel does not go to meet someone in that beautiful temple, where he went to see Zacharias. No, he is now sent to a city of Galilee named Nazareth. I have read that the name 'Nazareth' means, 'Guarded One.' Eedersheim says it means 'Watch' or 'Watcheress'. But what we notice is that it is in Galilee. Matthew 4:15 calls this area 'Galilee of the Gentiles.'

Now I have told you about the 48 Levitical cities of Israel and the 24 courses of priests. And when a course of priests was due to serve, and they were some distance from Jerusalem, they would car pool, to use modern terminology. They would meet in a certain place, and from there go to Jerusalem in a group, and Nazareth was such a car-pooling place. So several times a year Nazareth would have had a great influx of priests. Furthermore, it was on a trade route and had all kinds of differently dressed people from other cultures.

So let us read verses 26-27. The angel, we're told, went to one particular home, a home where a young lady, we believe, of possibly 14-15 years of age, named Mary, lived. The name 'Mary' isn't

that flattering. Although the NBD says it may come from an Egyptian name meaning, 'beloved', most don't agree with that. Some say it speaks of rebellion. Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia said it probably means 'corpulent'. Well, that sounded OK, so I checked what that means and it means, having great excess of fat. When you look at Mary from a human standpoint, she had three strikes against her before she ever started. But, if the name is not very flattering, this young woman, Mary, or as the Greek has it Mariam, was a very godly young woman as our passage will bear out. Out of all godly people over a period of 4,000 years God chose her.

Now we note that it says she was a virgin. Now I need to make a note here of Isaiah 7:14. It is a prophecy regarding this young woman, and it says, "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel." I will not take too much time here but to say that when the newer versions were coming on the scene, some insisted that the Hebrew word translated 'virgin' meant a young woman. But when Matthew quotes Isaiah 7:14 he translates that word with the Greek word 'virgin'. Without question that is its intended meaning.

But this young woman, though she was still a virgin, was betrothed. Now a betrothed couple in Bible times was somewhat like an engaged couple in our culture. That is they did not live together as yet. However, there is a difference between betrothal and engagement. A divorce was required to break a betrothal because the covenant between the couple was made at the time of betrothal. They were officially married.

Now note verse 28. The first thing the angel said was, "Rejoice!" The KJV says, "Hail." In the original it is an imperative verb, a command. And the command says, "Rejoice!" The angel will then tell her why she is to rejoice. First, she has been favored. The word here is 'graced'. She is to receive the highest honor any woman will ever receive. Never, in all of human history will

another woman receive an honor to this extent. Something is going to be graced to her. That means she did not earn this privilege. It is graced to her. The second reason she should rejoice is because the Lord was with her. Gabriel, the angel who stood in the presence of God so many times brings her this incredible message. And third, she was to rejoice because she would be blessed among women. She would receive that honor that many a woman had prayed for and none ever yet had received, and none would after this. She would be graced with an immeasurable privilege. I have told you how I understand this word 'blessed'. It means she would have a very 'enviable' privilege.

So, look at verses 29-30 (read). Now I want to make a note there. You see, what happened to Mary was not something that had not been on her mind. The angel said, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God." This verb *found* is in the grammatical active voice, meaning she had been seeking favor from God. Now whether she had been seeking this particular favor or not, we do not know, but I believe that to be the case. She had been actively desiring to be the bearer of the Messiah. Many women in the past had sought this privilege. Maybe women, I suppose, talked to each other about this. And she had heard such things and she sought to live in such a way that she might be that young woman. D.L. Moody heard a preacher say that the world has yet to see what God could do with a man totally committed to the Lord. And Moody said, "I want to be that man." Maybe that is what Mary said, "I want to be the woman that brings the Messiah into the world."

Now notice what the angel says in verses 31-33 (read). The angel told her that she would conceive a son. And she was to call His name 'Jesus'. The name in Hebrew is Jeshua. It means 'Jehovah is salvation'. Some of you have read a recent article about Rabbi Yitshak Kaduri. He was a very highly honored Jewish Rabbi. This Rabbi lived in Israel from 1923, that is 45 years before Israel became a nation, and he lived through all Israel's wars. He was very highly

revered. He died in 2006 at the age of 108. When he died nearly a quarter million people attended his funeral.

Rabbi Kaduri was especially known for his prophecies regarding the end times and the coming of the Jewish Messiah, though he was mixed up with the Jewish Kabbalah. The article I read said that towards the end of his life he was totally taken up with the coming of the Messiah.

So, let me read for you part of this article: *On Oct. 13, 2005, the followers of the centenarian rabbi waited anxiously to hear a much publicized "holy revelation" from their leader. It was Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement), the holiest day of the Jewish year. After being in a 45 minute, silent, trance-like state, the elderly holy man looked up and said, "I have met the Messiah." To say the least, the crowd was shocked!*

*The Rabbi went on to claim that his meeting of the Messiah was in a vision and that he knew Messiah's name! Then, he said he would reveal the name in a note, but that the note could not be read until one year after he died.*

*After a short illness, Rabbi Kaduri died on Jan. 28, 2006. One year later, millions of Jews were on pins and needles as they waited anxiously for the Kaduri note to be read, revealing the name of the Messiah. In typical Kabbalist style, the hand written note of Rabbi Kaduri said (translated to English):*

*"Concerning the letter abbreviation [or secret coding] of the Messiah's name, He will lift the people and prove that his word and law are valid.*

*This I have signed in the month of mercy,*

*Yitzhak Kaduri"*

*The key to understanding the message was easily recognized by the phrase "Concerning the letter abbreviation of the Messiah's name". It meant that they were to take the first letter of each*

word in the following part of the note to decipher the Messiah's name.

*They were completely astounded and shocked beyond words as they realized the letters spelled Yehoshua, or Yeshua. It is the name that is translated into English as JESUS!*

*Immediately, many began to deny that their beloved rabbi would write such a thing. Some said the note was a forgery, while others even went so far as to say that the elderly Kaduri had obviously lost his mind. To name Jesus as the true Messiah was (in their mind) a trick of the devil! It was blasphemy to even think such a thing! To say that perhaps the most celebrated rabbi in Israel would make such a declaration was unthinkable!*

*Every effort would be made to squash this story. But before it could be hidden, Israel Today printed the story...with a picture of the rabbi's hand written note.*

*This "revelation" was like an earthquake in Judaism... dividing the people over the Messianic note of Rabbi Kaduri and bringing destruction to the names and careers of some who were devoted to him. But there was MORE to the rabbi's claim of the God-sent revelation.*

*On the Yom Kippur that Kaduri announced that he had met the Messiah, he also said, "I must tell you something disturbing," he somberly continued. "I have no specific information to give you on the following matter other than what I am about to share with you now ... The Messiah has revealed to me that He will not present Himself until after the death of our prime minister, Ariel Sharon." End quote. By the way, Ariel Sharon just passed away this year on January 11.*

Well, you must understand that most Jews have never recognized Jesus, the Son of Mary as the Messiah. They adamately deny Jesus. As a matter of fact, any Jew, and especially a Rabbi caught saying Jeshua is the name of the Jewish Messiah

has committed a sin as serious to the Jews as blaspheming the Holy Spirit is to us. Such a confession is enough to ruin any Rabbi's name. But, you see, we did not need Rabbi Kaduri to tell us what Messiah's name is. Gabriel told Mary, and he told Joseph as well and it has been recorded in Scripture for some 2,000 years. But for the Jews to hear this from a Rabbi like Kaduri, may be the preparation ground for the Lord's 144,000 of Revelation 7 in the tribulation.

But I ask you, do we need any Rabbi or anyone else to tell us when Messiah will come? I believe His coming for the Church is an imminent event. We should be ready for His coming for the Church at all times, whether Ariel Sharon lives or dies does not change that. Maybe you have heard the recent talk surrounding the four blood moons coming up on Jewish holy days this spring and fall and next spring and fall. Excitement is mounting. Several times in the past when this happened, significant things happened among the Jews.

Let me just say this about the blood moon spoken of regarding the return of Christ, that it takes place at the end of the tribulation, which is at least seven years away or more. It may be that something significant will happen to the Jewish people at these four coming blood moons, but I believe it will not bring about the second coming of Christ. The blood moon and the eclipse of the sun, if that is indeed what is meant by Matthew 24:19 happens at the end of the tribulation. With regard to the rapture, we are taught to be ready at all times.

So, back to our subject. Notice verse 32, that it says He will be called great. Many who do not believe Jesus is the Messiah still call Him the great teacher. The angel then says, "He will be called the Son of the Highest." It is the apostle John that will picture Him as the Son of the highest. But listen to the rest of this prophecy now, "...and the Lord will give 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."

The kingdom that is here spoken of is the kingdom we know as the millennium. Daniel had prophesied of 70 weeks upon the Jewish people and on Jerusalem. And as I calculate it, Jesus was born between the 65th and 66th week. After the 70th week the kingdom here spoken of was to come. When Jesus ministered they were within a few years of the end of the 69th week. At the end of that 69th week Jesus was crucified. Then the 70th week was put on hold, and the Church age entered. We have been in that time for some 2,000 years. When the Lord takes His bride, the Church home, this 70th week will begin. Then just seven years after that, the prophecy Gabriel gave to Mary will take place and Christ will rule forever.

We go then to verses 34-38 (read). Well, in light of the Angel Gabriel's prophecy, Mary says, "How can this be, seeing I do not know a man." What she is saying is how can I have a son when I am not married yet?" And the angel tells her that God will be the Father of her Son. Well, the angel tells her about Elizabeth's conception and when he has told Mary that with God nothing is impossible, the angel leaves Mary.

Elizabeth will later acknowledge that Mary believed what the angel said. I marvel. It is absolutely astonishing that God found such faith, and that in a young woman. She was young. She was named "Corpulant one". And what is even more amazing is that God found this young woman in Galilee of the Gentiles. To top that off, in the city of Nazareth of Galilee of the Gentiles! Of the events that are recorded here, so much is so contrary to the thinking of many Rabbis, how did a young woman like Mary believe the angel?

## 2. Mary's visit to Elizebeth (1:39-56)

So, let us read verses 39-45 where we are told of Mary's visit to Elizebeth. Notice on the map now where Mary would have gone and notice the 'hill country' (Topographical map). She would have gone



to Ein Karem. That is where Zacharias and Elizebeth lived. Today, 3 million people a year visit this place because of the birth of John the Baptist here.

Well, when Mary arrived there, Elizabeth experienced something that immediately alerted her to the fact that this was no ordinary visit and that something supernatural was going on. And we read an interesting clause here, and that is that Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit when she and Mary met.

Now the clause to be filled with the Holy Spirit never occurs in the OT. Only one time in the OT does the clause, "filled with the Spirit" occur. But here it speaks of the Spirit of wisdom. But when Jesus was about to come into the world, we find this clause several times. We find this clause in Luke 1:15, 41, 67.

Now I want you to note something else about Mary in verse 45. Elizabeth said, "Blessed is she who believed..." Mary exercised faith when the angel spoke to her. And the verse tells us what she believed, she believed those things the angel said to her from the Lord. Mary, this young woman, was more believing than her elderly uncle Zacharias.

So, let us read verses 46-55 (read). I want us to consider for a moment what kind of woman Mary was. She said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior." Here is a young woman who has filled herself with the Word of God. It is highly unlikely that she had any OT books. But I expect she went to the synagogue every Sabbath, and that she listened when the rabbis and priests were talking with others. She must have gathered every piece of Scripture she could in her mind. It was one thing for a man to be like this, it was quite another for a woman to be like this, never mind a young woman, and I do not doubt she was young. In order for her soul to magnify, make the Lord big in her eyes, she has known Him quite intimately. And for her spirit to rejoice in God indicates the same.

But note that she knew God as her Savior. In this time when the prophets had been silent for 400 years and Israel had wandered far from true godliness, here is a young lady who knows God as her Savior! Note well, she does not say, "our Savior" but "my Savior." She knew Him as her personal Savior. I want to remind you we are still in OT time and in OT times they got saved by grace through faith as well. Some day I want to speak about grace and show you what the OT has to say about that.

And why did her soul magnify the Lord and her spirit rejoice in God her Savior? Well, in verse 28, when Gabriel came to her he said, "Rejoice!" And then he told her what was about to happen. And so she says, "For He," that is the Lord, "has regarded the lowly estate of His maidservant." From all appearance, she grew up in a home that was not wealthy. Then, furthermore, she was from Galilee. Not only was she from Galilee of the Gentiles, but she was from Nazareth. Later, after Jesus had grown up, one day He was by the Sea of Galilee and he saw a man by the name of Philip. And Jesus said, "Philip, follow Me." When Philip later found Nathaniel, his brother, he said, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets wrote -- Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." And Nathaniel said, "Can any good thing come from Nazareth?" You see, Nazareth was the lowly of the low in an area viewed as lowly. Amazing, is it not, that God found the woman He had been looking for there!

Well, Mary realized that after she would bear the Messiah into the world, many would call her blessed. But no doubt God spared her from knowing that some would venerate her as the sinless mother of God and would pray to her and revere her. For some of these reasons God probably never let us know what day Jesus was born. We have such a propensity to worship the wrong thing.

But I want you to notice something very important Mary reveals. She says in verse 50, "His mercy is on those who fear Him from generation to generation." If Mary were alive today she would

not endorse that Calvinistic doctrine of unconditional election. I have discussed that doctrine with Calvinists. One can hardly get into that discussion and they have already taken you to Romans 9. So go there. Look at verses 10-18 (read). Now how do Calvinists conclude on this? They conclude that God has sovereignly chosen some people to salvation, but He has sovereignly chosen the majority to reprobation. You see, the passage says plainly, "I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion." In other words, I will not have mercy or compassion on those I don't want to have mercy and compassion on.

So, I ask you, has God predestined most people to go to hell, and a few to be saved? I want to tell you in no uncertain terms that whether you go to hell or heaven is not God's choice, it's yours! Let me show you something from the OT. Turn to Exodus 20. We find something very beautiful in the recording of the ten commandments (read 1-6). Now notice whom it is that God rejects in verse 5 (read). It is those who hate Him. He does not show mercy to those who hate Him. Then notice to whom He does show mercy in verse 6 (read). Now you will find this same teaching throughout Scripture. But notice how Mary puts it in Luke 1:50. Isn't that beautiful?

Does God have mercy on those on whom He wishes to have mercy, and on those He does not want to have mercy He doesn't? Yes that is so. Is it not up to Him on whom He wishes to have mercy? Yes. And because He is a good God, He wishes to have mercy on those who obey Him and those who fear Him, and on the proud He does not wish to have mercy. Is that His prerogative? Yes! You see, that is the right thing to do! And He does the right thing because He is good. So look at God's character as Mary reveals it in verses 51-55 (read).

He puts down the proud and the mighty. You see, Luke has said, "There was in the days of Herod the king of Judea, a certain priest..." Well, Herod was a proud, vile, unholy, blasphemer. Well, if

you read history you will find him dying a very painful, undignified death. But, in the days of Herod the king, God found this young woman in that despicable town of Nazareth, a humble godly girl, and He raised her up to become the mother of the Messiah! God did not will to have mercy on Herod. If you will read of Herod, you could not have mercy on him and be just at the same time. Although, let me say, that Herod always had the choice to humble himself and God would have been merciful to him. But God willed to have mercy on Mary. Why? She feared Him and obeyed Him!

Well, verse 56 says that Mary remained with her about three months, and returned to her house. It will have been difficult for Mary, since she is expecting, and she is betrothed, but she and Joseph had not yet had their public marriage after which they would live together. But she is comfortable staying with her aunt because her aunt knows the whole truth.

But Mary leaves before Elizabeth has her son, and one might wonder why. Eedersheim reasons that when Elizabeth has her son, all the neighbors will be there to celebrate with her and Mary will be awkward in her condition to answer questions as to why she is there. So, just before Elizabeth is delivered, Mary goes back home.

CONCL: And so, as we conclude, I remind us that we are in that section of the Gospels I call "The Preparation of The Messiah For The World." All of what we have here is part of that preparation. Elizabeth has conceived. The promised forerunner of the Messiah is about to be born. Now Mary has conceived, and shortly the long promised Messiah will be born. If we were not so familiar with these facts, we would stand in awe at what we are finding in these Gospel accounts.