

# Nothing Is Impossible with God

By Lance Gentry

sermonaudio.com

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

**Preached on:** Sunday, September 18, 2011

## **Austin Bluffs Evangelical Free Church**

3435 Maizeland Rd

Colorado Springs, CO 80909

**Website:** [www.abefc.org](http://www.abefc.org)

**Online Sermons:** [www.sermonaudio.com/abefc](http://www.sermonaudio.com/abefc)

All right. Please take your Bibles along with me and turn to the gospel of Luke. Luke's gospel chapter one.

Are you a pessimist or an optimist? Yes. It depends on which day, right, or the time of the day maybe. In the mornings I am a pessimist. Things start looking better as the day wears on. For you is the glass half full or half empty? Or are you an engineer and the glass is oversized for optimal containment efficiency?

Someone once said that a pessimist is a person who has had to listen to too many optimists.

Or how about this one? An optimist stays up until midnight to see the new year in. A pessimist stays up to make sure the old year leaves.

Winston Churchill, that great British statesman, saw his share of hard times and he said this. He said, "A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity. An optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty."

How do you view the challenges of life, the difficulties you face, the uncertainties? As we will see this morning, the Christian has every reason to be an optimistic, not because the world is so good or is getting better all the time. We all know that is not the case. Not because life is easy, not because it is always pleasant. But the Christian should be optimistic because God is so good and so powerful and so ready to act on our behalf. The Christian has every reason to be an optimist about the future.

If I was to put optimism in a more biblically defined word, a more biblical term, it would be hope. The Christian has every reason to be a hopeful, because his hope is in God.

Look with me at Luke chapter one verse 26 as we continue to see this narrative, this careful history of Dr. Luke recording the history of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Verse 26, chapter one.

Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was

Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming in, he said to her, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you."

But she was very perplexed at this statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this was.

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 name Him Jesus. 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 have no end."

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

The angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God. And behold, even your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age; and she who was called barren is now in her sixth month. For nothing will be impossible with God."

And Mary said, "Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.<sup>1</sup>

*Heavenly Father, I pray this morning that no matter our outlook on life, no matter our outlook of the future, no matter our outlook of the day ahead, that you would grow us in hope, hope not in ourselves, hope not based on the world, hope not based in any government or economy, but hope squarely built on our knowledge of you, that with you all things are possible, that you are providentially, systematically working out your perfect will in our lives for our good and for your glory. May you grow in us a humble submissive attitude like that of Mary.*

*"Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word."*

*We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Luke explains here that what is about to take place in verse 26 onward takes place in the sixth month. The sixth month refers to Elizabeth's pregnancy. This is happening as Elizabeth is finishing up her second trimester. You recall, as we studied last week, Zacharias, a priest and Elizabeth were pretty mature in years. They were well beyond child bearing years and they were without children and yet God promised through the angel Gabriel that, indeed, Elizabeth would have a son and they would name him John and he would be the forerunner to Messiah. Messiah was on his way. His coming was

---

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

very, very soon. And, as we see, the beginning of his coming comes only six months after Zacharias and Elizabeth received that miraculous word.

Gabriel, whose name means mighty one of God, is sent to Nazareth, a small town, an insignificant town in the region north of Jerusalem the region called Galilee, a region surrounding the Sea of Galilee. Nazareth was a rather tiny village 55 miles north of Jerusalem. It is a city, a town, a village never mentioned in all of the Old Testament.

Verse 27 tells us that Gabriel was sent to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph. Joseph was a descendant of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. The name Mary was quite common in those days. It means something like excellence. Mary was a virgin. The term that Dr. Luke here employs is the normal term to use of any woman who has never known a man sexually, a fact that is further supported by Mary's own question that comes in verse 34 when she says:

“How can this be, since I am a virgin?”<sup>2</sup>

Notice, too, that Luke mentions the fact of Mary's virginity twice here in this one verse, verse 27.

Now although Mary is still a virgin, she is nevertheless engaged. She is engaged to this man Joseph.

Now our understanding of engagement and the engagement that was known in the time of the Bible are two very different things. When a woman was engaged in New Testament times, a Jewish woman in particular, she was pledged to be married. She was betrothed.

Now, certainly in engagement we know a level of commitment. There is a level of expectation that this is going to lead to marriage, but it is not marriage in our day and time. Marriage is another step. It was different in the time of the Bible. To be betrothed to someone involved a formal, witnessed agreement to marry them. And it involved a financial exchange of a dowry or a bride price. Such betrothal could take place as early as 12 years old for the woman. This betrothal period usually lasted for about a year. And during this time the couple was regarded legally as husband and wife, though they did not share a home and they did not consummate the marriage during that time. During this engagement period unfaithfulness on the part of the wife could result in punishment even punishment by death.

At the end of the engagement period there would be another ceremony and the couple would then consummate the marriage, moving in together. But make no mistake about it, during this betrothal period the couple was married. And it required a legal act to separate them. That is not like our view, our understanding, our practice of engagement. It is very different indeed.

---

<sup>2</sup> Luke 1:34.

Now Mary was engaged. She was betrothed. She was married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. Joseph could trace his lineage back to King David. Despite his royal lineage, we have no indication that he was anything special in terms of royalty. He wasn't regarded as a great citizen of the village from which he came, an insignificant village at that. We know he was a good carpenter, probably of humble means.

The angel came to Mary in verse 28 and said to her:

“Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.”<sup>3</sup>

The language here indicates that Gabriel entered her house, came into her house. And he says to her, “You who are highly favored, you have been shown grace by God.”

The text is very clear that Mary is the one here who is being shown grace, that Mary is not the dispenser of grace, but rather is the receiver of grace, grace that has come from God. The angel further explains that the Lord is with you. He is with her to bless her and to guide her, to help her, to keep her.

Now Mary was very troubled at all of this, as you can well imagine. A young girl suddenly confronted with an angel inside her home or wherever she was at the moment, caught off guard, doesn't understand what is going on, is pondering this greeting, uncertain about this salutation. What is this going to lead to? Where is this going to end up?

The angel seeks to calm her fears in verse 30 and says, “Don't be afraid, Mary. Don't be afraid.” The same thing that the angel said to Zacharias. “Don't be afraid, Zacharias.

“...you have found favor with God.”<sup>4</sup>

You have found grace. That is the word for favor, divine, unmerited favor.

“...you have found favor with God”<sup>5</sup>

The angel now begins to explain why he has come, what he was there for. And as he does so we are going to see together seven seemingly impossible truths about the child who would be born to Mary, seven seemingly impossible truths about this child who would be born to a virgin, truths which, if we viewed them from a simply rationalistic and realistic perspective we would say highly improbable. If we viewed them from a pessimistic perspective we would say impossible. But, as we will see, with God all things are possible.

The first thing the angel reveals to Mary, the first seemingly impossible reality is that this child will have a seemingly impossible mission. He would be called Jesus.

---

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

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

Verse 31.

“And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus.”<sup>6</sup>

As in the case of the revelation that God gave to Zacharias and Elizabeth through Gabriel, the name of the child was given, Jesus. Jesus is the Hebrew word Joshua which is a contraction of Jehoshua, Jesus being the Greek form. And the name means the Lord is salvation.

Matthew’s account gives us the reason for this name and it points to the mission that Jesus would have. The angel appears to Joseph in Matthew chapter one in verse 21. The angel explains to Joseph that Mary will bear a son and you shall call his name Jesus. Why? For he will save his people from their sins.

This child is going to save his people from their sins. The Lord is salvation. Jesus, Joshua.

Jesus had this seemingly impossible mission, a mission of saving a sinful humanity from their sins. One life given for many. One life lived in such a way that it would be an acceptable sacrifice, one life to redeem countless thousands, a seemingly impossible mission. And yet with God all things are possible.

Secondly, we see his seemingly impossible description. He will be great, verse 32. The angel said Jesus is going to be great. The Greek word there is the word μέγας (meg’-as) from which we get mega. Talk about a megalopolis or a megalomaniac. He is going to be mega.

Now you remember, maybe, that Gabriel said something similar about the child that was to be born to Zacharias and Elizabeth about John the Baptist. Look back with me in Luke chapter one verse 14. The angel there says:

“And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. For he will be great in the sight of the Lord.”<sup>7</sup>

John the Baptist would be great in the sight of the Lord or in God’s eyes or in God’s judgment, from God’s perspective.

Take note of the difference here. John’s greatness is qualified. John would be great in the Lord’s sight. Whereas of Jesus it was said simply that he would be great in an unqualified sense. Jesus’ greatness was absolute and was intrinsic to him. Greatness summarizes who Jesus is. He is great, μέγας (meg’-as).

---

<sup>6</sup> Luke 1:31.

<sup>7</sup> Luke 1:14-15.

Now this, on the face of it, seems impossible, to be great in an unqualified sense.

Muhammad Ali would say, "I am the greatest."

But everyone recognized that that was hubris talking. That was smack talking. The greatest at what? The greatest boxer? Ok, maybe. But not the greatest in an unqualified sense. There have been great people, truly great people to be sure, men and women of great influence, great gifting, great courage, great strength, great leadership, great influence. But in spite of all of their greatness all of them had flaws, right? All of them had vices. All of them had weaknesses. All of them had chinks in their armor. They all had a bent towards selfishness, toward greed, toward pride, toward lust. You name it. They had some weakness and many times this weakness overshadows their greatness.

As great as any person has ever been, their greatness is always tinged and tainted with the effects of fallen nature. But there was someone who was great in an unqualified sense, someone whose greatness was not marred in any way by fallenness. Great, in fullest, most perfect, unsullied sense of that term. Great. That is what Jesus is.

Think about just how true Gabriel's words truly are. Jesus is great. Great in power. Jesus could speak and still the storm. Jesus could speak and heal the sick. Jesus could speak and raise the dead. Jesus was great in power. He was great in compassion. Did ever anyone have the compassion that Jesus Christ had to look over a city that had largely rejected him and weep over it? Speak of how he would long to gather them together as a mother gathers her chicks. Great in character, great in wisdom, great in leadership, great in humility, great in sacrifice, great in terms of the lasting impact that he left upon the world.

Is there anyone greater? Can you look at anyone else, scan the corridors of time, look over the books of history that have been written. Has anyone left a more lasting impression upon this world than Jesus Christ? Not even close. Absolute, unqualified greatness in this child named Jesus. It seems impossible. But with God all things are possible.

A third seemingly impossible truth is that he had a seemingly impossible position. He would be the Son of the most high.

Verse 32.

"He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High."<sup>8</sup>

The term, "the most high," is a description of God's supreme exaltation above all things. He is the highest. The most high is the highest. Do we all agree on that? The highest one. Jesus will be called the Son of the highest one, the Son of the glorious one, the Son of the exalted one.

---

<sup>8</sup> Luke 1:32.

To be the son of someone communicates that you share in the same essential nature as your father. The apple doesn't fall far from the tree. You are going to be the Son of the most high. You are going to occupy the same position of exaltation that your Father does, the most high one.

Think about that for a moment. The Son of the most high, the one who shares the same essential nature as the Father, the one who is supreme in exaltation and majesty would soon be placed inside the highly confined area of Mary's womb. He would take on flesh and he, the Son of the most high, would look no different than you or I. You could scan a crowd and you wouldn't be able to pick him out.

You know, we have these pictures of Jesus and he usually has some halo around him, some holy glow. There were moments... rather there was a moment when Jesus allowed a few of his disciples to see his glory or something of his glory, anyway. And it was radiant and it was brilliant. But on the whole it didn't look like that. Jesus didn't look like that. He looked like anyone else even though he was the Son of the most high.

When you go back and you read passages like Isaiah chapter six which pictures God lofty and exalted, seated on his throne and the train of his robe filling the temple and there is smoke filling the area and there is an angelic, antiphonal chorus calling out back and forth, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God almighty."

He would be the Son of the most high, truly extraordinary. This is his position. He is the Son of the most high and therefore equal to the most high. And yet what humility.

Our own Brian Thomas had posted on Facebook recently I believe his own ... in his own words Philippians 2:6-8. I thought he just did a great job. I want to read it for you.

"Jesus of Nazareth, though he is God from eternity past and called the world into existence, laid aside the glory that was rightfully his and took upon himself genuine human nature in its humblest expression, a child who would become a servant obedient unto the cruel and ignoble death of the cross. He would be the Son of the most high."

Fourthly, he had a seemingly impossible kingdom, a seemingly impossible kingdom. Verses 32 and 33. The angel says:

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 have no end.<sup>9</sup>

The Lord God is going to give to Jesus the throne of his Father David. David would be his Father. He would be in the royal lineage of David. And he would inherit the throne of his Father David.

---

<sup>9</sup> Luke 1:32-33.

Jesus' lineage, therefore, can be traced back to David through Joseph. Jesus was the ultimate Son who would completely fulfill the promise of God to David through the prophet in 2 Samuel chapter seven verses 12 through 16. The promise of an eternal kingdom. And this eternal kingdom would be ruled by an eternal king. The king and the kingdom have no end.

Nothing will be able to bring him down. Nothing will be able to conquer. The kingdom will not cease. The kingdom cannot fail.

It seems impossible, doesn't it? An unceasing kingdom, an eternal kingdom with an eternal king reigning? This is not normal stuff. These are not the things we are used to. Kingdoms rise and kingdoms fall. Every dog has its day, but then that day passes. Empires rise in wealth, in power, in influence and empires fall.

The annals of history are witness to that. But not this kingdom and not this king. There will never be a time when this kingdom's greatness is eclipsed by another, is threatened by another. It is an eternal kingdom ruled over by an eternal king and the king is Jesus.

Fifthly, a seemingly impossible conception. Verses 34 and 35.

All of this talk prompts a good question from Mary in verse 34.

“And Mary said to the angel, ‘How can this be, since I am a virgin?’”<sup>10</sup>

Now you may recall that Zacharias asked a question, too. He said... his was a little different. Mary's is a how question. How is this going to happen? Zacharias' was an if question.

How do I know if this is the real deal? How do I know if I should believe what you are telling me? Mary's is not that question. She just wants to know how it is going to happen. She believes it. She just doesn't know how.

The angel answers her. And he explains in verse 35 how this conception is to occur.

“The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy offspring shall be called the Son of God.”<sup>11</sup>

The angel explains that the child will be conceived not by sexual union. Mary is probably young here, but she is old enough to know how things work. That prompts her question. How is this going to work? I am a virgin.

The angel explains that this baby is going to come as the result of a miraculous act of the Holy Spirit, the miraculous creative act of the Spirit, not by any kind of sexual union.

---

<sup>10</sup> Luke 1:34.

<sup>11</sup> Luke 1:35.



God is going to do this thing. The same God who could speak the worlds into existence, who could make the first man and the first woman out of dirt and then breathe life into their lungs is the same God who could miraculously cause this virgin to conceive a child without ever knowing a man, seemingly impossible. And yet with God all things are possible.

And then at the end of verse 35 Gabriel gives two more seemingly impossible descriptions of this child.

Sixthly, he will have a seemingly impossible nature. He will be the holy one. Verse 35.

Gabriel describes this child that will be conceived as “They holy one, the holy child.”

Holy, without sin, not a bit of it, not a single stain of rebellion, not an ounce of immorality, nothing. He will be the holy child, untainted by sin, unaffected by the fall, perfectly righteous, pure, all together just, always doing the right thing, always doing what pleases the Father, fulfilling all righteousness, not merely pursuing holiness, as we all should, but actually possessing it practically, experiencing it daily. Jesus was the only person in all of human history to have been born holy, born without sin, born righteous and remaining righteous, living a life of perfect holiness.

Now think about that. Think about a single day in your life of perfect holiness, one day, one 24 hour period.

Ok, you sleep six, seven, eight hours, nine hours, 10 hours if you are fortunate.

All right, so let’s cut that back a little bit. Let’s call it 16, 18 hours. Sixteen to 18 hours of always doing what is pleasing to the Father. Every thought, every word, every action always doing that which pleases God. Could you do it for a single 18 hour period? I couldn’t. I would fail in my motives. I would fail in my thoughts. I would fail in my responses. But not Jesus.

Seventh, he would have a seemingly impossible Father. Verse 35.

“...for that reason the holy offspring shall be called the Son of God.”<sup>12</sup>

He is the Son of the most high. He is the Son of God. Similar titles, but different.

As I said, to be the son of something is to be equal in nature to that person that you are the son of. The child shares the characteristics of the father. So Jesus will be the Son of God. Son of God is a title that is seldom, if ever, used by Christ for himself. Son of God is, however, the title used by the Father to refer to his Son Jesus.

“This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!”<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> Luke 1:35.

See, God used that of Jesus both at his baptism and at his transfiguration. Jesus Christ was and is the Son of God and, therefore, equal with God. He is God incarnate, God in the flesh, Son of God, has the added reality to it that it was a well known messianic title. Messiah would be Son of God, a Son of God.

Psalm two, that royal enthronement psalm. God refers to that one who takes the throne as my Son.

“Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way.”<sup>14</sup>

Pay homage to him.

A regal title for the King that is yet to be born, a King who is the Son of God.

Seven seemingly impossible realities about this child that is to be born. Each of them seems impossible and yet Gabriel gives some very encouraging words to Mary in verse 36, confirming and encouraging words.

“And behold, even your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age; and she who was called barren is now in her sixth month.”<sup>15</sup>

Mary, I know what I am saying is blowing your mind. I know you think, how can this be? How is this going to happen? How can the is all come about? And me? Little me? From me is going to come this greatness? How can this be?

Ah, Mary, I want you to know. Great things have already taken place. Your cousin Elizabeth, you know, the old lady. There is going to be a baby shower and you are invited. She is already in her sixth month. This isn't something that is maybe going to happen to Elizabeth. It has already happened. She is already along, far along. She is showing. She who was called barren is now, right now, this very moment in her sixth month. And she has got a healthy baby inside and it is all as a result of God's divine intervention in her life, a result of God showing favor to her and to Zacharias. And the same will be true for you. Why? Because verse 37:

“...nothing will be impossible with God.”<sup>16</sup>

Do you believe that? Nothing is impossible with God. Why? Simple answer, because he is God. He is in control of all things. He is all powerful. He is all knowing and he is good.

---

<sup>13</sup> Matthew 17:5.

<sup>14</sup> Psalm 2:12.

<sup>15</sup> Luke 1:36.

<sup>16</sup> Luke 1:37.

We believe the all powerful part. I think most of the time we forget all the goodness part, especially when things are tough.

He is able. Nothing is impossible for him. All of these things surely seemed impossible to Mary and yet the angel affirms and confirms and ensures that nothing will be impossible with God.

Notice Mary's response. May our response be the same? A response of faith, a response of worship, a response of submission and obedience to all that she has heard. Mary said, verse 38:

“Behold, the bonds slave of the Lord.”<sup>17</sup>

I am just a servant. I am the slave of God. If God wants to do this with my life, then so be it.

Listen. This wasn't going to be easy for Mary. There were going to be questions. There was going to be talk. There was going to be a price to be paid and Mary knew it. She didn't know how it was all going to turn out. It wasn't all roses and good news here. She knew that God was at work in her life and she was submitting to that divine providential work.

“Behold, the bonds slave of the Lord; be it done to me according to your word.”<sup>18</sup>

She not only submits to it, she embraces God's plan for her. How could she do that? Because I believe she was an optimist. More biblically speaking, I believe she had hope, hope in the Lord, hope in the God who makes all things possible, hope in the God who is all powerful, who is good and who is ready to act on behalf of his people. There is no greater proof of that than the birth of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world.

*Heavenly Father, give us, as a people hope. And having given us hope, Lord, allow us to submit humbly and embrace your plans for our life. Even if those are plans that we had never envisioned before. I am sure Mary never envisioned any of this. And yet it was what you had for her. You chose wisely, Lord, a woman who would submit, who would obey, who would embrace what you have for her. Lord, let us be hopeful Christians, optimistic about the future knowing that our God is in control and that all things are possible with him. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

---

<sup>17</sup> Luke 1:38.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

# *7 Seemingly Impossible Truths about the Child Who Would Be Born to Mary*

- 1. A Seemingly Impossible Mission**
- 2. A Seemingly Impossible Description**
- 3. A Seemingly Impossible Position**
- 4. A Seemingly Impossible Kingdom**
- 5. A Seemingly Impossible Conception**
- 6. A Seemingly Impossible Nature**
- 7. A Seemingly Impossible Father**