

“The Christ Of Christmas”

Luke 1:26-38

Message by Michael J. Barnard

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Teaching Aim: To examine the circumstances surrounding “*the incarnation*” of Jesus Christ and to understand why the “*virgin birth*” is so important to us today. To observe the incredible faith of Mary, even as a young teenager. To realize all of us have difficulties in life, but with God nothing is impossible. To understand, by grace through faith, the door to salvation has been opened by Jesus to anyone who puts their trust in Him!

DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD’S WORD (*BIBLE STUDY*)

Part I: The angel Gabriel appears to a young virgin named Mary (Luke 1:26-27)

1. Some have tried to claim that the angel Gabriel is an archangel. Does the Bible back this claim up? Who is the only angel in the Bible specifically called an archangel? (See **Jude 9**) The angel Gabriel had a specific mission from God every time we see him in the Bible, what is it (**vs. 26**)? (See **Dan. 8:15-17; 9:21-27; Matt. 1:20-21; Luke 1:11-20; 26-38**) Where was Mary living when Gabriel suddenly appeared to her? Was there anything unusual about this little city? (See **John 1:43-51**)

2. What does it mean for a couple to be “*betrothed*” (**vs. 27**)? (See Bible Commentaries) How was being “*betrothed*” in Biblical times different from engagement today? Who was Mary betrothed to? What was required to terminate a betrothal? (See Commentaries) What can we learn about this young man’s background from **Matt. 1:1-18**?

Part II: Gabriel’s message about the coming birth of the Messiah (Luke 1:28-33)

1. What did Gabriel instruct Mary to do in **verse 28**? In what way was Mary blessed? The description “*highly favored one*” has at times been interpreted, “*full of grace*”? Is Mary simply the recipient of God’s grace, or the dispenser of it as so many believe today?

2. How did Mary (*probably just a few years beyond puberty at this point*) react to the message from the angel (**vs. 29**)? Before Gabriel’s revelation to Zacharias, how long had it been since God had spoken a revelatory message to Israel? How do you think Mary felt as she heard the message from the angel?

3. The angel seemed to sense Mary's fear; what did Gabriel say to comfort the young girl in **verse 30**? Was this response similar to the way Gabriel responded to Zacharias in **verses 11-17**? If not, why not? According to **verse 30**, why did Mary have no reason to fear?

4. What startling announcement did Gabriel bring to Mary in **verse 31**? Why would this be a surprise to Mary? (See **vs. 34**) Had anything like this ever happened before in all of history? Has it happened since? According to **verse 31**, what Old Testament prophecy would be fulfilled by the incarnation of Jesus Christ? (See **Isa. 7:14**) Why is "*the virgin birth*" so crucial to the Christian faith and to our salvation today? (See **Matt. 1:1; 20-23; Rom. 5:12-21; 1 Cor. 15:20-23; 2 Cor. 5:21**)

5. What is the significance of the title "*the Son of the Highest*" (**vs. 32**)? What do we learn about the deity of Jesus Christ from this title? (See Commentaries) According to **verses 32 & 33**, whose throne will Jesus sit on? When will this reign begin and how long will it last (**vs. 33**)? (See **Isa. 9:6-7; Rev. 20-22**)

Part III: Mary's miraculous conception foretold by Gabriel (Luke 1:34-38)

1. Mary never doubted the message Gabriel brought her, but simply asked him, "*How can this be since I am a virgin?*" (**vs. 34**). What did Mary mean when she said, "*I do not know a man?*" According to Gabriel, how would this miracle take place (**vs. 35**)?

2. People today tend to go to one extreme or the other when it comes to Mary; either they worship her and give her too much glory or they ignore her and don't give her the attention due. How should we relate to Mary today as Christians? What can we learn about Jesus from the title, "*Immanuel*"? (See **Isa. 7:14; 9:6-7**) Would you agree that Mary's womb became "*the holy of holies*" on earth during the time she carried the baby Jesus? Why or why not?

3. What unexpected revelation was given to Mary as a sign proving the authenticity of Gabriel's words (**vs. 36**)? Elizabeth was in her old age (*beyond childbearing age*) and had been barren her entire life. According to Gabriel, how long had she been pregnant when he informed Mary of what God would do? What was the name of the baby in Elizabeth's womb and what special role did God have in store for him? (See **verse 13, 16-17**)

4. What incredible truth was revealed to Mary in **verse 37**? How should this truth affect every Christian today? Are you facing a seemingly impossible situation in your life today? If so, what is it? Have you turned the situation over to God?

5. What was Mary's response to the message from Gabriel (**vs. 38**)? What can we learn about the spiritual maturity of Mary from her response? How was Gabriel's response to young Mary in **verse 38** different than the way he responded to Zacharias (*the elderly priest*) in **verses 18-22**? Why did he respond differently? What can we learn about the degree of Mary's faith from **verse 38**? When it comes to your faith, are you more like Zacharias or Mary? What difficult events in your life have helped to strengthen your faith?

6. This Christmas, why not receive the greatest gift ever? It is by grace through faith in Christ alone that we can find salvation! If you have never received Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, why not receive right now in prayer? (See **John 3:16; 14:6; Acts 4:12; Eph. 2:8-9**)

MINER'S CORNER ~ *Manna to live by!*

- The angel Gabriel appears multiple times in Scripture, each time announcing a revelation relating to the birth of Jesus Christ!
- Mary was a poor young Jewish girl from Nazareth, perhaps only 14 or 15 years old!
- Mary demonstrated an incredible level of spiritual maturity for a youth her age!
- The virgin birth of Christ is critical to the Christian faith and to our salvation today; through it Jesus bypassed being born with a sin nature!
- Mary conceived the baby Jesus apart from a human father when the Holy Spirit of God overshadowed her; *"for with God nothing is impossible!"*
- Mary did not doubt the message from Gabriel like the elderly priest Zacharias did, she simply asked him, *"How will this be since I am a virgin?"*
- Mary's faith and trust in God should be an example for every Christian today!