

Bible Stories for Adults

Jesus' Annunciation

Luke 1:26-38

Opening

Gathering: What stories have you heard about God sending angels to His people today?

Today's Focus: God sent Gabriel to announce to an engaged girl that she was chosen by grace to be the mother of the Savior of the world.

Key Verses: *The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.* Luke 1:35

Nothing is impossible with God. Luke 1:37

Opening Prayer

Lesson

Review of Last Week (*Luke 1:1-25*)

How does the historian Luke transition from the Old Testament into his story of Jesus?

Luke 1:5-7 = Story of Zechariah and Elizabeth, devout Jewish priestly couple, old, childless

What happened toward the ends of the lives of these faithful Jews?

Luke 1:8-9, 11, 13 = God sent an angel to tell them they would have a son, John

Why would God send an angel just to tell an elderly couple they would have a child?

Luke 1:14-17 = He would be the messenger who would prepare the people for the Messiah

How did the angel reply when Zechariah couldn't believe what he was seeing and hearing?

Luke 1:18-20 = Introduced as Gabriel sent by God; Made Zechariah deaf(?) & dumb as proof

What other proof was this couple given that what the angel said was true?

Luke 1:24 = The old woman Elizabeth became pregnant

An Arch-Angel's Travel Itinerary (*Luke 1:26-27*)

When do we next hear of this arch-angel Gabriel at work?

Luke 1:26 = Six months later, God sent him to Nazareth - last mention of Gabriel

Galilee - Northern section of Palestine, Populated by mixture of Jews and Gentiles (Matthew 4:15)

Considered by Judean Jews as second-class citizens

Only occasionally able to attend services and ceremonies of the temple

Could become wealthy from plentiful land (grain, fruit) and sea (fish)

Galileans considered materialistic for giving up spiritual blessings for material gain

How did the chief priests and Pharisees feel about Jesus being a Galilean? = Jonah was from Galilee

John 7:52 = It was proof that Jesus was not the Messiah or even a prophet

Nazareth - An insignificant town hidden in a basin in southern Galilee

Roman garrison nearby brought gentile influence and a bad reputation

How did other "second class" Galileans feel about Nazareth? = Nathanael was from Cana (John 21:2)

John 1:46 = Nothing good could come from Nazareth

Who was Gabriel sent to visit in Nazareth?

Luke 1:27 = A teenager named Mary who was betrothed to a man named Joseph

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Betrothal or Engagement

Engagements were arranged by parents, often while still children

Couples were betrothed in a ceremony that legally bound them

After a betrothal period of up to a year, the man would take his wife home (marriage)

Girls usually betrothed after puberty (able to have children); Men in mid-twenties (established in trade)

Hail, Mary! (Luke 1:28)

How did Gabriel greet this teenager that told her she was chosen for a special job?

Luke 1:28 = *Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.*

What did Gabriel mean by saying Mary was *highly favored*?

Luke 1:42-43 = She was chosen for the job that all Jewish women longed for

Roman Catholics translate this as "*Thou art full of grace*" and therefore pray to her

The text does not imply that she would be a *source* of grace, but rather a *recipient* of grace

Who did John say was full of grace?

John 1:14, 16-17 = Jesus was full of grace and truth and brought it to us

Does this mean that us normal humans cannot be filled with God's grace?

Acts 6:8 = No, but grace comes from God to the saints, not from saints to each other

Why Me, Lord? (Luke 1:29-30)

How did Mary's response show that she was chosen by God's grace and not for her grace?

Luke 1:29 = She was confused why she might be chosen

What did Mary say in her prayer that further shows she felt undeserving?

Luke 1:47-49 = God has blessed me despite my humble state

Is there any reason Mary was singled out over so many others?

Luke 1:30 = She had *found favor with God* - He knew her faith and willingness to serve

The Annunciation (Luke 1:31-33)

What news did Gabriel announce (announce) to Mary?

Luke 1:31 = She would become pregnant and have a son named Jesus – "Yahweh saves"

Jesus - Greek form of the Hebrew *Joshua* = a common Jewish name in those days

Numbers 13:16 = Moses changed name from Hoshea (salvation) to Joshua (Ya-Hoshea)

What would be special about this child?

Luke 1:32a = *He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High*

What important truth about Jesus do these words to Mary confirm?

Isaiah 9:6 = *Unto us a child is born* (humanity), *to us a son* [of God] *is given* (deity)

What else did Gabriel tell Mary about this child?

Luke 1:32b-33 = Sit on David's *throne*, rule over David's *house*, *kingdom* never end

How would a good Jewish girl like Mary understand this?

2 Samuel 7:16 = He would fulfill God's promise to David (house, kingdom, throne)

Mary's Immediate Reply (Luke 1:34)

How had Zechariah responded to Gabriel's announcement that he would have a son?

Luke 1:18 = He couldn't believe it. He asked *how he could be sure*

Did Mary express similar doubt when she was told she would have a son?

Luke 1:34 = No, she believed it but asked *how it would happen*

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Here's How (Luke 1:35)

How would Mary become pregnant even though it would be months before Joseph took her in?

Luke 1:35a = Was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin

The terms "*come upon*" and "*overshadow*" do not refer to sexual activity. Examples are:

Genesis 1:2 = *The Spirit of God moved on the face of the waters* - active in creation

Exodus 40:34-35 = The Spirit of God overshadowed the tabernacle in a cloud

Matthew 17:5 = Same word used for cloud enveloping Jesus at Transfiguration

Here's Why (Luke 1:35)

What had Gabriel already said about Jesus that he wanted to be sure Mary understood?

Luke 1:35b = He will be the Son of God

Why did Gabriel call Jesus the Holy One?

2 Corinthians 5:21 = Paul said Jesus had no sin so He could be a sin offering for us

1 Peter 2:21-22 = Peter said He fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy as an example & *committed no sin*

1 John 3:5 = John said that *in Him is no sin* so He might take away our sins

Here's Proof (Luke 1:36-37)

Although she didn't ask for it, what proof did Gabriel give Mary for this impossible birth?

Luke 1:36-37 = Elizabeth's pregnancy shows that *nothing is impossible with God*

What Old Testament story might this statement remind Mary of?

Genesis 18:14 = Sarah had Isaac in her old age - *Is anything too hard for the Lord?*

Where do we hear other confirmation of this great power of God?

Job 42:2 = Job said, *You can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted.*

Jeremiah 32:17 = Jeremiah said, *Nothing is too hard for you.*

Matthew 19:23-26 = Jesus said, *With God all things are possible*

Mary's Response (Luke 1:38-40)

How faithfully did Mary accept this promise? = Handmaid was lowest form of female servant

Luke 1:38 = Accepted her job as *the Lord's servant* (handmaid) - willing submission

What did Mary do after the angel left?

Luke 1:39-40 = She took Gabriel's suggestion and went to see Elizabeth

Joseph's Decision (Matthew 1:18-19)

How long did Mary stay with Elizabeth? = Gabriel came to Mary in Elizabeth's sixth month (1:26)

Luke 1:56 = About 3 months, until right before John was born

What surprised Joseph when he welcomed his betrothed Mary back to Nazareth?

Matthew 1:18 = She was 3 months pregnant, *She was found to be with child*

If girl became pregnant during betrothal, the man had three options:

Accept the adultery and proceed with the marriage (compassionate, but unrighteous)

Publicly divorce the woman and have her stoned to death (Deuteronomy 22:13-27)

Quietly divorce the woman (Deuteronomy 24:1)

How did Joseph plan to handle Mary's situation?

Matthew 1:19 = Divorce her quietly

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Jesus Kept Legitimate (*Matthew 1:20*)

How did God change Joseph's mind?

Matthew 1:20 = Sent an angel who told him son was conceived by the Holy Spirit

What did the angel tell Joseph that would be special about this child?

Matthew 1:21 = *He will save His people from their sins* - Jesus means *The Lord saves*

Why had God put Joseph in such a predicament? = Isaiah 7:14

Matthew 1:22-23 = To fulfill prophesy of a virgin with child - *God with us*

Hebrew for virgin in Isaiah 7:14 (*alma*) can mean *virgin* or *young woman*

Greek for virgin in Matthew and Luke (*parthenos*) means only *virgin*

What did Joseph finally decide to do?

Matthew 1:24 = He trusted and obeyed God's instructions and took Mary as his wife

Why didn't Joseph consummate the marriage?

Matthew 1:25 = To keep the virgin birth pure and without question

Notes on Matthew and Luke

The four Gospels emphasize different aspects of Jesus:

Matthew - The King of the Jews

Mark - The Servant of God

Luke - The Son of Man

John - The Son of God

Luke recorded the birth events involving Jesus' human mother Mary

Luke 3:23-38 records Jesus' genealogy back to the first man, Adam, through Mary's line

Matthew emphasizes the royal rights of Jesus by presenting His birth through Joseph's view

Matthew 1:1-17 records Jesus' genealogy back to David and Abraham via Joseph's line

Closing Prayer

Response - Consider and meditate on one each day this week

1. When have I looked down on others as second class people?
(*John 1:46; Job 34:16-19; Proverbs 28:21; Acts 10:34-35; Romans 2:11; 12:3-8; James 2:1-9*)
2. When have I felt that I have found favor with God?
(*Luke 1:28-38; 2:13-14, 52; Genesis 4:3-5; 6:8; 19:16-21; Exodus 33:12-19; 1 Samuel 2:26; 2 Kings 13:4-5; 2 Corinthians 6:1-2*)
3. When have I been surprised by God's goodness and grace to me?
(*Luke 1:29; Genesis 12:1-3; Psalm 31:19; 34:8; Romans 5:6-8; 8:28; Ephesians 1:3; 1 Peter 2:2-3*)
4. How has God shown me that nothing is impossible with Him?
(*Luke 1:37; Job 42:2; Jeremiah 32:17; Matthew 17:20; 19:23-26; John 15:1-5; 2 Corinthians 12:9-10; Philippians 4:13; 2 Timothy 4:16-18*)
5. When have I taken the role of a servant for God?
(*Luke 1:38; Matthew 20:25-28; 25:31-40; John 13:1-17; 1 Corinthians 3:5-9; Philippians 2:5-7; Colossians 1:24-26; Hebrews 13:1-3*)