

# A MINISTRY FOR HUNGRY SAINTS

## THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

+ THE BOOK OF LUKE

### WHAT WE MOST ASSUREDLY BELIEVE

WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRIES, ASSOCIATED

*An overview of the Gospel of Luke, by Given O. Blakely*

#### Lesson #3

##### LUKE 1:1-2

"Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, which from the beginning were eye witnesses, and ministers of the word"

"Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and shalt call His name Jesus."

Luke 1:31

#### COMMENTARY ON: 1:24-38

##### GABRIEL IS SENT BY GOD TO MARY

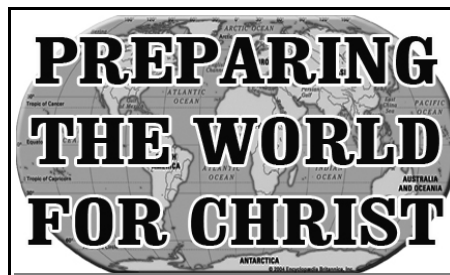
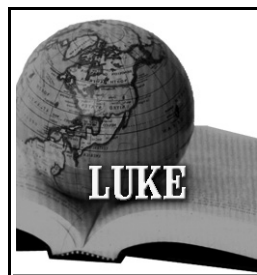
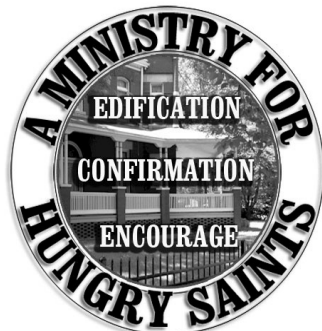
After Elizabeth withdraws to a secret place, God sends the angel Gabriel to Mary, a virgin who was espoused to Joseph, of the house of David. He announces that she has been especially favored, that the Lord was with her, and that she was blessed among women. While she was troubled, and considered this kind of salutation, Gabriel told her not to be troubled, that she had found favor in the sight of the Lord. He then told her she was going to conceive and bring forth a son, whom she was to name "Jesus." He would reign over the house of Jacob, and of His kingdom there would be no end. Gabriel also told Mary that Elizabeth, her cousin, had also conceived a son, and it was the sixth month with her, for with God all things are possible. Mary responded, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. The angel then departed from her.

##### LUKE 1:3-4

"It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed."

"And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven."

Luke 24:51



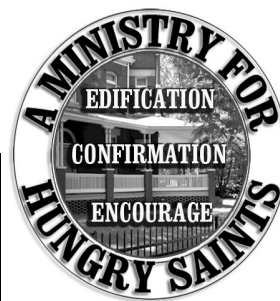
Since May, 1993, a ministry instituted for the encouragement of believers in Christ





## The Book of Luke, 10/3/2014

### Lesson Number 3



A MINISTRY INITIATED IN MAY 1993, AND DEDICATED TO STRENGTHENING THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST, BY BUILDING THEIR FAITH, ENHANCING THEIR JOY, AND STABILIZING THEIR HOPE, ENABLING THEM TO WORK OUT THEIR SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.

**TRANSLATION LEGEND:** ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot m(1992); ALT=Analytical-Literal Translation (2005), AMPLIFIED=Amplified Bible (1965), ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot with Greek Interlinear (2003); ASV=American Standard Version (1901), BBE=Bible in Basic English (1949), BRENT=Brenton's English Septuagint; CEB=Common English Bible (2011); CEV=Contemporary English Version (1995); DRA=Douay-Rheims (1899), EMTV=English Majority Text (2002); ERV=English Revised Version (1885), ETRV=Easy to Read (1999), ESV=English Stand Version (2001), GENEVA=Geneva Bible (1599), GNB=Good News (1966), GSNT=Goodspeed (1923), GWN=God's Word (1995), IE=International English (1973), ISV=International Standard Version (1967), JPS=Jewish Publication Society (1917), JUB=Jubilee Bible (2003); KJV=King James Version (1611), LITV=Literat Translation of the Bible (1976), LIVING=Living Bible (1971), MESSAGE=The Message (1993), MKJV=Modern KJV (1962), MONTGOMERY=Montgomery's New Testament (2001), MRD=Peshitta-James Murdock Translation (1852), NAB=New American Bible (2002), NASB=New American Standard Bible (1977), NAU=New American Standard Bible (1995), NIB=New International Bible, NIV=New International Version (1984), NJB=New Jerusalem Bible (1985), NKJV=New King James Version (1979), NLT=New Living Translation (1996), NRSV=New Revised Standard Version (1989), PHILLIPS=J B Phillips New Testament (1962), PNT=Bishop's New Testament (1595), RSV=Revised Standard Version (1952), TNK=JPS Tanakj (1985), WEB=Webster Bible (1833), WEYMOUTH=Weymouth's New Testament (1903), WILLIAMS=William's New Testament (1937), TYNDALE=Tyndale's Bible (1526), WYCLIFFE=Wycliffe New Testament (1382), YLT=Young's Literal Translation (1862)

#### ----- GREEK LEXICON LEGEND -----

LEXICON LEGEND: FRIEBERG = Friberg Lexicon, UBS = Barclay-Newman, LOUW-NIDA = Louw-Nida Lexicon, LIDDELL SCOTT

PERSUADED OF THE NECESSITY OF KNOWING THE CERTAINTY OF THE THINGS WE BELIEVE, LUKE MAKES US MORE FIRM BY BUTTRESSING OUR FAITH, AND CONFIRMING WE HAVE NOT EMBRACED FABLES.

**DISCLAIMER:** The quoting of other translations is not to be taken as a condoning of them. My purpose is rather to show the remarkable diversity, and sometimes outright contradictions that exist among these various versions of Scripture. Our understanding of the Word of God ultimately depends upon our comprehension of the Lord Himself and His eternal purpose. Where this understanding is not present, we are shut up to scholasticism and conjecture, both of which are of the world, not of God.

# GABRIEL IS SENT BY GOD TO MARY

LUKE 1:24 "And after those days his wife Elisabeth conceived, and hid herself five months, saying, <sup>25</sup> "Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein he looked on me, to take away my reproach among men. <sup>26</sup> And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, <sup>27</sup> To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup> And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. <sup>29</sup> And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. <sup>30</sup> And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God. <sup>31</sup> And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. <sup>32</sup> He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: <sup>33</sup> And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. <sup>34</sup> Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? <sup>35</sup> And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. <sup>36</sup> And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. <sup>37</sup> For with God nothing shall be impossible. <sup>38</sup> And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her." ..... Luke 1:24-38

## INTRODUCTION

### A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE TEXT

After Elizabeth withdraws to a secret place (Lk 1:24), God sends the angel Gabriel to Mary, a virgin who was espoused to Joseph, of the house of David (Lk 1:26-27). He announces that she has been especially favored, that the Lord was with her, and that she was blessed among women (Lk 1:28). While Mary was troubled, and considered this kind of salutation,

Gabriel told her not to be troubled, that she had found favor in the sight of the Lord (Lk 1:29-30). He then told her she was going to conceive and bring forth a son, whom she was to name "Jesus" (Lk 1:31). He would be great, and would reign over the house of Jacob, and of His kingdom there would be no end (Lk 1:32-33). Upon Mary's inquiry, the angel told her how the conception would occur (Lk 1:34-35). Gabriel also

told Mary that Elizabeth, her cousin, had also conceived a son, and it was the sixth month with her, for with God all things are possible (Lk 2:36-37). Mary responded, "*Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word*" (Lk 1:38). The angel then departed from her.

### A CHARACTERISTIC OF REVELATION

We see in this text something that

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is characteristic of all revelation. **The focus is always on what God is doing, or will do.** The concentration of revelation is never what the devil or those aligned with him are doing. The heart of what God is saying does not relate to what men are doing or ought to do. **While such things are declared in what God reveals, they are not the hub upon which the revelation turns.** Men have been known to write numerous religious books that are about sub-topics – things that draw the curiosity of men, shine the light upon inferior things, and cause men to gain temporary advantages rather than promoting the praise and honor of God and Christ.

With the rise of technology, and a means of communication that has, in a sense shrunk the world, religious novelty in music, literature, and art have become vast business empires. The explosion of religious bookstores, Christian authors on the best-selling list, and electronic media have not yielded the results one would think. The

religious “IQ” of the people has actually dropped, even though there is a phenomenal explosion of information. Scriptural illiteracy has reach epochal proportions. Moral degeneracy within the church is on the increase. All of this has taken place during the unparalleled proliferation of information.

**What this means is that the burden of the religious information that is popular has neither moral nor spiritual power.** It cannot produce moral or spiritual improvement in men. It is the kind of data that is not, and cannot be blessed by God. We know this is the case, because He is not working through it in the manner revealed in Scripture. Instead, men have become purveyors of material that is being used by Satan and his hosts to promote darkness, ignorance, and alienation from God, as well as divisions among professed believers.

Now, let it be clear in your mind that these are not the kind of results that are wrought by the truth of God, which, when known, makes men free (John 8:32).

**The results we are seeing in the church-world are not the kind of results wrought but Holy Spirit of God.** The fruit He produces includes love, joy, peace, longsuffering,, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance (Gal 5:22-23). The Holy Spirit effectively leads men to put to death the deeds of the body (Rom 8:13-14). He causes men abound in hope through His matchless power (Rom 15:13). God uses the Holy Spirit to strength us in the inner man in order that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith, which causes men to “*be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ,*

*which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God”* (Eph 3:16-18). In addition to this, the Holy Spirit is the one who is changing believers from one increasing stage of glory to another, while they are beholding the glory of the Lord (2 Cor 3:18).

I do not see how any one can fail to see that the absence of the revealed effects of the Spirit’s work reveals the absence of the Spirit Himself. Nothing in all of revelation remotely suggests that the Holy Spirit is idle, or that He fails to accomplish what He is intended to do. A sterile an unproductive person or church has either quenched and grieved the Holy Spirit of God (Eph 4:30; 1 Thess 5:19), or they have never received the Holy Spirit. The only other alternative is that God has not revealed the truth of the matter – and only a fool would dare to entertain such a thought. Further, a spiritual culture has been produced by a goods number contemporary Christian leaders that has concealed these rather obvious realities.

When a message and an approach to the things of God is taken that does not have God and Christ as their center, those messages and approaches conceal the truth of God, so that it cannot be seen by those who proclaim and embrace them. The only way to realize an escape from these obscuring emphases is to disown them, refuse to believe them, and turn away from those who are associated with them. That is a word that has come down to us from heaven: “*This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those*

**A sterile an unproductive person or church has either quenched and grieved the Holy Spirit of God, or they have never received the Holy Spirit.**

*that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away"* (2 Tim 3:1-5).

**WHAT DOES THIS HAVE TO DO WITH OUR TEXT?**

It may appear as though this is nothing more than a verbal tirade, diatribe, or philippic. Rather, however, it is intended to accent the power that is unqualifiedly associated with the Gospel of Christ (Rom 1:16), which is what Luke is declaring. In fact, Luke tells us that Jesus *"taught the people in the temple, and preached the gospel"*

(Luke 20:1).

This book is about the Gospel, and for that reason, it has power – moral and spiritual power; power that will impact directly on how a person thinks and lives. If we will give heed to what Luke tells us, the Holy Spirit will work through its message to change us.

## AFTER THOSE DAYS

LUKE 1:24a **"And after those days . . ."**

Other versions read, *"after these days,"* NASB *"After that time"* BBE *"Afterward,"* CEB *"Following this,"* CJB *"Later,"* GWN *"After some time,"* NET *"Some time later,"* NJB *"Soon afterward,"* NLT *"and in course of time,"* WEYMOUTH *"It wasn't long,"* MESSAGE and *"Now after this."* AMPLIFIED

### THE DIVINE MANNER

We are being exposed to the Divine manner of assessing events. **God does not report things in terms of solar time.** That is why there are no dates in Scripture, even though dating was practiced in all civilization. In the Lord, *"time"* is view as *"appointed"* times. These are viewed in regards to what God has purposed. Therefore we read expressions like the following. There is a record in Scripture of appointments made by men (1 Sam 13:8; 21:2; 2 Sam 20:5; Neh 5:14; 12:44). The following are appointments made by God.

9:5).

⇒ *"In the time appointed in the month"* (Ex 23:15).

⇒ *"At a time appointed"* (Josh 8:14).

⇒ *"To the time appointed"* (2 Sam 24:15).

⇒ *"Is there not an appointed to man upon earth"* (Job 7:1).

⇒ *"The days of my appointed time"* (Job 14:14).

⇒ *"At the time appointed the end shall be"* (Dan 8:19).

⇒ *"The time appointed was long"* (Dan 10:1).

⇒ *"The end shall be at the appointed time"* (Dan 11:27).

⇒ *"At the time appointed he shall*

⇒ *"For the vision is for an appointed time"* (Hab 2:3).

⇒ *"And [God] hath determined the times before appointed"* (Acts 17:26).

Expressions like *"it came to pass"* and *"after those days"* are pin-pointing the next significant thing that took place – *"significant"* having to do with the purpose of God.

### EVERY HUMAN EXPERIENCE IS NOT SIGNIFICANT

From the Divine point of view, every human experience is not significant. If it was, then the Scriptures would be filled with such details. However, that is simply not the way the Scriptures have been written. We read that Lot was *"vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked,"* but are provided no details of the same (2 Pet 2:7). Knowing that Esau had married some heathen women, Rebekah said to Isaac, *"I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth"* (Gen 27:46), yet no details are provided about the cause of such weariness – other than the fact that they were *"daughters of the land"* – Canaanites. It is written that Sarah saw Ishmael, the son of Hagar, *"mocking"* her son, Isaac. However, no further details are provided (Gen 21:9).

From the beginning of Genesis through the conclusion of the book of the Revelation, there is not a single record of any person or group of persons for which a normal day's

**From the beginning of Genesis through the conclusion of the book of the Revelation, there is not a single record of any person or group of persons for which a normal day's activities are described**

⇒ *"At the time appointed"* (Gen 18:14).

⇒ *"The Lord appointed a set time"* (Ex

*return"* (Dan 11:29).

⇒ *"It is yet for a time appointed"* (Dan 11:35).

activities are described:—i.e. a standard day in the life of the faithful, so to speak. When events are mentioned, whatever they are, they are always related to something bigger than the events themselves.

That is why Scripture often passes over great periods of time as though they did not even exist. Some of them would be:

- ⇒ The last seven hundred and ninety years of Adam's life.
- ⇒ The first four hundred and eighty years of Noah's life.
- ⇒ The first forty years of Moses' life, and the details of the next forty years of his life.
- ⇒ The life of Jesus between the ages of two and twelve, and from twelve until thirty.
- ⇒ The life of John the Baptist until he was thirty.
- ⇒ The lives of Stephen and Philip; until they were among those chosen to administer the distribution of food.
- ⇒ The life of Paul prior to Stephen's

**When men are unduly caught up in the minutia of life, it has a distracting influence upon the heart. When they are lived for the Lord, and unto the Lord, the details of life are sanctified, and no longer become distractions.**

stoning, saving for the fact of him being brought up at Gamaliel's feet, to which a single sentence is devoted (Acts 22:3).

- ⇒ The period of time from Malachi until John the Baptist.

#### AN OBSERVATION

When men are unduly caught up in the minutia of life, it has a distracting influence upon the heart. **When lives are lived for the Lord, and unto the Lord, the details of life are sanctified, and no longer become distractions.** That spiritual posture also ensures that we will do the very best we can in activities having more to do with this world, than the one toward which we are journeying.

I will say that it requires wisdom

from God to live in this manner, so that "necessary uses" (Tit 3:14) are addressed thoroughly without obscuring the real reason for living.

**Now, the Scriptures are written with proper priorities for living in mind.** The Spirit will not walk us through the details of an average day in the lives of Zecharias and Elizabeth. There is a remarkable emphasis in modern preaching on these kinds of things. Whole sermon-series are presented on family life, the details of being a husband or a wife, how to handle discouragement, and a host of other similar things.

This kind of emphasis has been borrowed from the psychiatric field, and has actually worsened the conditions men attempt to correct.

## HIS WIFE ELIZABETH CONCEIVED

"<sup>24b</sup> . . . *his wife Elisabeth conceived, and hid herself five months, saying,* <sup>25</sup> *"Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein He looked on me, to take away my reproach among men."*

The next significant thing to take place was the conception of Elizabeth. Further, as soon as Zacharias' appointed service in the Temple had been completed, that is what took place. Zacharias and Elizabeth acted upon the promise. Let us be clear about this: the word to Zacharias was, "*thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John*" (Luke 1:13). Zacharias knew this would be a

miraculous birth, for his wife had been barren all along, and was now advanced in age. Yet he and Elizabeth acted upon that word, not requiring any further instruction.

Because of the sensitivity of the subject, it is enough to say that **when people actually do believe God, a lot of subsidiary questions are answered, and the believer will know what to do.**

This principle is wrapped up in living by faith – and "*the just shall live by faith*" (Rim 1:17; Gal 3:11; Heb 10:38). **They do not live by routine, or by habit, or by a humanly devised structure.** They live by faith, in the

unqualified persuasion of the reality of God and Christ, and the truth of what has been made known in the Scriptures. If you do not yet see this, you must accept the fact that your faith is the appointed means through which the Lord directs you, and imparts any needed wisdom. The unvarnished truth is that without faith, a person ought not to expect profitable Divine direction.

#### HIS WIFE ELIZABETH CONCEIVED

" . . . *his wife Elisabeth conceived . . .*"

If this was an ordinary woman, there would have been nothing unusual about the conception that is mentioned.

**It should be apparent to everyone that if God did not purpose and manage salvation from its beginning to the end, it simply would never have happened.**

But Elizabeth was no ordinary woman, and the child that would be miraculously conceived by her would be no ordinary child. Also, Divine history is sprinkled with conceptions that were the direct result of the working of the Lord – a working that was transcendent to nature. These include:

- ⇒ Sarah, a barren woman who gave birth to **Isaac** (Gen 21:1-2).
- ⇒ Rebekah, a barren women who gave birth to **Jacob** and Esau (Gen 25:21-23).
- ⇒ Rachel, a barren woman who gave birth to **Joseph** and Benjamin (Gen 30:22-24; 35:18-19).
- ⇒ Manoah's wife, a barren woman who gave birth to **Samson** (Judges 13:2-5,24).
- ⇒ Hannah, a barren woman who gave birth to **Samuel** (1 Sam 1:2,11,20).
- ⇒ Elizabeth, a barren woman who gave birth to **John the Baptist** (Lk 1:7,13,24,41).
- ⇒ Mary, a virgin who gave birth to **Jesus**, the Son of God (Matt 1:23; Lk 1:27; Matt 1:25).

**When it comes to the implementation of the salvation of God, the hand of God is seen throughout everything.** This confirms that humanity was in a condition that could not be adequately addressed through the wisdom and aptitudes of men. In order to confirm this, God allowed four thousand years to pass before the Savior was sent into the world by means of a miraculous birth. He allowed men to work without law, and within the framework of law, to resolve the problem of sin, **and it simply could not**

**be done** – not even after at least one hundred generations, and billions of people had come and gone.

**It should be apparent to everyone that if God did not purpose and manage salvation from its beginning to the end, it simply would never have happened.**

**SHE HID HERSELF FOR FIVE MONTHS**  
“...and hid herself five months...”

Other versions read, “*she kept herself in seclusion,*” <sup>NASB</sup> “*she remained in seclusion,*” <sup>NIV</sup> “*kept herself from men's eyes,*” <sup>BBE</sup> “*didn't go out in public*” <sup>GWN</sup> “*kept to herself,*” <sup>NJB</sup> “*didn't go out of her house,*” <sup>IE</sup> “*concealed herself,*” <sup>ABP</sup> “*did not leave the house,*” <sup>CEV</sup> and “*She went off by herself.*” <sup>MESSAGE</sup>

There have been a number of speculations about why Elizabeth secluded herself for five months. Some say it was to prove the word of the Lord, to see if she really did conceive. Others say it was to avoid shame. Still others are of the opinion that she sought to ready herself to care for the extraordinary child to be born of her.

It seems clear to me that, from what she said to herself in the next verse, there was no ignoble motive, shame, or doubt involved.

Elizabeth had waited for a long period of time, and no doubt felt a holy inclination to give extended praise to God for the blessing she was going to receive. I am also rather inclined to think that she waited to present herself to the public until her very presence confirmed that the promise of God was true. Had she immediately went about telling what Gabriel had told her husband, there might well have been some mockers who would have scoffed at the idea of her giving birth to a child

at such an old age.

#### A Cautionary Word

As a matter of observation, those who have experienced a sudden change of heart do well to testify of it modestly, until such time as their lives confirm the reality of which they have testified. There have been far too much premature boasting by those who had, at the very best, a very shallow start in their spiritual life.

This by no means suggests that there should be any shame when newness of life is experienced. It does mean that those in that early stage should not boast as though were further along than they really were. As the king of Israel said to Benhadad, “*Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off*” (1 Kgs 20:11).

#### THE LORD HATH DEALT WITH ME

“ . . . saying, *Thus hath the Lord dealt with me . . .*”

Other versions read, “*this is the way the Lord has dealt with me,*” <sup>NASB</sup> “*The Lord hath done this for me,*” <sup>NIV</sup> “*This is the Lord's doing,*” <sup>CEB</sup> and “*How kind the Lord is!*” <sup>NLT</sup>

Elizabeth correctly saw this as God paying deliberate attention to her. Scripture does apprise us that “*the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him*” (2 Chron 16:9), and here is an example of that taking place – and Elizabeth knew it. We are also apprised that “*The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and His ears are open unto their cry*” (Psa 34:15), and here is a notable example of that taking place.

Blessed are the people who perceive the Lord's favor being upon them, and give Him due praise for it.

#### IN THE DAYS WHEREIN HE LOOKED ON ME

“ . . . in the days wherein He looked on me . . .”

Other versions read, “*in the days*

when He looked with favor upon me,"  
NASB "in these days He has shown His favor," NIV "when He looked favorably upon me," NRSV "for His eyes were on me," BBE "He has shown me favor at this time," CJB "now that it has pleased Him," NJB "in the days when He deigned to look on me." AMPLIFIED

When the Lord beholds, or focuses His attention upon, a person or a group of persons, or even a nation, He is set to do something about what He sees. This is why godly men would cry out to God, "Look Thou upon me, and be merciful to me" (Psa 119:132).

As simple as that plea may

appear, great numbers of professing Christians appear unaware of the legitimacy of such a cry. Rather than lifting up their voice to God, they left up murmuring and complaining, which emits from their lips. Poor souls, indeed!

#### THE LORD TOOK AWAY MY REPROACH

" . . . to take away my reproach among men."

Other versions read, "to take away my disgrace among men," NASB "took away the disgrace I have endured among my people," NRSV "to take away my shame in the eyes of men," BBE "by removing my disgrace among other

people," CEB "to take away the humiliation I suffered in public," NJB "to remove my scorn among men," ABP "will keep people from looking down on me," CEV and "Now people will stop thinking there is something wrong with me." ERV

Like Hannah of old (1 Sam 1:6), Elizabeth had been viewed with some measure of disdain – and now she was a woman of great age. **Yet, in a single day, her entire situation turned around, and joyful expectation was awakened within her heart.** Be of good cheer, those of you who are waiting for the mercy of the Lord. Your situation may abruptly change in a single moment of time, and then you will be rejoicing!

## IN THE SIXTH MONTH

" <sup>26</sup> **And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, <sup>27</sup> To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.**"

#### IN THE SIXTH MONTH

"And in the sixth month . . ."

Other versions read, "Six months after Elizabeth had become pregnant," GWNI/NET/NLT and "The following month." LIVING

This was in the sixth month since Elizabeth's conception. It reveals how close to the Messiah's public appearance John was when he began preparing the way. His ministry commenced six months before the official beginning of Jesus' going about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed by the devil (Acts 10:38).

Think of it. Some preparation started four thousand years earlier in the Garden (Gen 3:15). Some took place during the ministry of Moses,

some fifteen hundred years earlier. Then there was the preparatory ministry of the prophets, dispersed over a period of several hundred years. The preparation reached its crescendo with John the Baptist, who is precisely said to have prepared the way for the Lord (Isa 40:3-4; Lk 1:76). This confirms something of which we have spoken considerably during recent times – namely that **the rich promises of God are opened up most completely when they are about to be fulfilled.**

#### GABRIEL US SENT BY GOD

" . . . the angel Gabriel was sent from God . . ."

Other versions read, "sent by God," NKJV "God sent the angel Gabriel," NIV and "the messenger Gabriel." YLT

You will notice that the holy angels always obey the Lord, instantly, and precisely. It is written of them, "Bless the LORD, ye His angels, that excel in strength, **that do His commandments, hearkening unto the**

**voice of His word.** Bless ye the LORD, all ye His hosts; ye **ministers of His, that do His pleasure.**" (Psa 103:20-21). Even the devil does what God tells him to do, as confirmed in the case of Job (Job 1-2). **It is man that is noted for disobedience, recalcitrance, and tardiness.**

#### TO AN ESPOUSED VIRGIN

" . . . unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary."

Notice how precise the commission was. Gabriel was to:

- ⇒ Go to "A city of Galilee named Nazareth."
- ⇒ Find "A virgin."
- ⇒ Specifically the one "Espoused to a man named Joseph."
- ⇒ Joseph was to be "Of the house of David."
- ⇒ "The virgin's name was Mary."

All of God's ways are that precise, that focused, that detailed. They are

**You will notice that the holy angels always obey the Lord, instantly, and precisely.**



designed to teach us to take the Word of God seriously, personally, and with determination. Those who have a penchant for generalities will not realize much, if any, Divine direction.

Also notice that the will of man did not enter into this matter at all. This was not an opportunity to be opened to volunteers. The assignment of those involved was made in heaven, completely without any consultation with anyone upon the face of the earth. The moral status of the woman involved was chosen by God. The man to whom she was to be married was chosen by God. The city where the encounter would occur was chosen by

God. The specific woman was chosen by God.

Further, there will be no offer presented that required the consent of the virgin involved. **Gabriel is not sent with a proposal, but with an announcement of what has been determined.** There will be no exhortation to accept the announced role, but willingness will be the result of Divine power. As it is written, *"Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power"* (Psa 110:3).

When the Psalmist accounted for *"all the ends of the earth"* remembering and turning to the Lord, he traced it

back to the government of God. *"All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the LORD: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Thee. **FOR the kingdom is the LORD'S: and He is the governor among the nations**"* (Psa 22:27-28).

As with all ordained accounts recorded in Scripture, the nature and power of God Himself is being revealed. **The salvation of God will not introduce a manner of working that contradicts what God has revealed of Himself.** Nor, indeed, will men be required to independently do what things already proved impossible for men to do. This will be wholly a work of the Lord!

## AND THE ANGEL CAME TO HER

*"<sup>28</sup> And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women."*

Immediately upon being commissioned of the Lord, the angel goes in to the virgin woman to whom he has been sent.

### THE ANGEL CAME IN UNTO HER

*"And the angel came in unto her. . ."*

Other versions read, *"and having come in,"* NKJV *"and coming in,"* NASB *"the angel went in to her,"* NIV *"he came to her,"* NRSV *"Approaching her,"* CJB *"the angel entered the house, and said to her,"* MRD *"Gabriel appeared to her,"* NLT and *"So the angel came to her home."* WILLIAMS

There was apparently no delay in Gabriel's arrival at the place where Mary was staying.

I pause here to point out examples of historical art depicting the annunciation. Three depictions are shown in the graphic on this page. In all of them, Mary is the accent rather than the angel, who was the messenger of God. During the years those paintings were completed (1333, 1472, and 1610), the Roman Catholic church had



successfully perpetrated the deification of Mary. According to Catholic doctrine, Mary is the one God has appointed as a mediator between the saved and Jesus. During most of the period between 1333 and 1610, the Scriptures were not in the hands of the general populous. Through popes and councils the elevation of Mary to near-equality with Jesus was accomplished. Catholic dogma also teaches that Mary was a perpetual virgin, and that she ascended into heaven like Jesus did. This is staple Catholic doctrine.

### HAIL

*" . . . and said, Hail . . ."*

Other versions read, *"The angel greeted Mary,"* CEV *"Rejoice,"* NKJV *"Greetings,"* NIV *"Peace be with you,"* BBE *"Shalom,"* CJB *"Congratulations,"* LIVING *"Joy be to you,"* WEYMOUTH and *"Good morning."* GOODSPEED/MESSAGE

### CATHOLIC DOCTRINE ON THE ASSUMPTION OF MARY

"The doctrine of the Assumption says that at the end of her life on earth Mary was assumed, body and soul, into heaven, just as Enoch, Elijah, and perhaps others had been before her. It's also necessary to keep in mind what the Assumption is not. Some people think Catholics believe Mary "ascended" into heaven. That's not correct. Christ, by his own power, ascended into heaven. Mary was assumed or taken up into heaven by God. She didn't do it under her own power.

"The Church has never formally defined whether she died or not, and the integrity of the doctrine of the Assumption would not be impaired if she did not in fact die, but the almost universal consensus is that she did die. Pope Pius XII, in *Munificentissimus Deus* (1950), defined that Mary, "after the completion of her earthly life" (note the silence regarding her death), "was assumed body and soul into the glory of heaven." "CATHOLIC ANSWERS"

<http://www.catholic.com/tracts/immaculate-conception-and-assumption>

The lexical meaning of the word translated *"Hail"* is, "1) TO REJOICE, BE GLAD 2) TO REJOICE EXCEEDINGLY 3) TO BE WELL, THRIVE 4) IN SALUTATIONS, HAIL! 5) AT THE BEGINNING OF LETTERS: TO GIVE ONE GREETING, SALUTE." <sup>THAYER</sup>

The English word *"hail,"* as used in this text, means "SALUTE, GREET: TO GREET WITH ENTHUSIASTIC APPROVAL: ACCLAIM 2: TO GREET OR SUMMON BY CALLING." <sup>MERRIAM-WEBSTER</sup>

For me, words like *"Welcome"* and *"Good morning"* are a bit vulgar as a salutation by an angel from heaven. As used here, it was a salutation that heralded heavenly favor and blessing, a privilege that is not vouchsafed to everyone. It also suggests recognition by the bearer of the good news.

#### THOU ART HIGHLY FAVORED

*" . . . thou that art highly favored . . . "*

Other version read, *"highly favored one,"* <sup>NKJV</sup> *"favored one,"* <sup>NASB</sup> *"you who are highly favored,"* <sup>NIV</sup> *"to whom special grace has been given,"* <sup>BBE</sup> *"favored lady,"* <sup>CJB</sup> *"favored woman,"* <sup>CSB</sup> *"Hail, full of grace,"* <sup>DOUAY</sup> (Catholic Bible), *"thou art freely loved,"* <sup>GENEVA</sup> *"you who enjoy God's favor,"* <sup>NJB</sup> *"You're beautiful with God's beauty, Beautiful inside and out!"* <sup>MESSAGE</sup> *"freely beloved,"* <sup>PNT</sup> *"endued with grace."* <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

As to the phrase *"full of grace"*

was *"full of grace"* (Acts 6:8). Excepting for the Alexandrian, Latin Vulgate, and Syriac copies of the Scriptures, the Greek manuscripts use the word *"pistis,"* which is the word for *"faith,"* which other standard versions use. My personal persuasion is that such deviations represent an effort of the powers of darkness to diminish the absolute uniqueness of Jesus. However, I will let the matter rest there. Ancient manuscript or not, I do not believe a person who requires grace can themselves be *"full of grace."*

#### THE LORD IS WITH THEE

*" . . . the Lord is with thee . . . "*

Other versions read, *"God be with you."* <sup>MESSAGE</sup> Of the forty-eight version of Scripture that I have, "The Message" is the only one that does not read, *"The Lord IS with you."* The Message Bible represents that as something that is desired. **The text is actually the announcement of an existing circumstance.**

This same announcement was made to **Gideon**: *"And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valor"* (Judg 6:12). Nathan also saluted **David** in the manner when delivering a message about David building God an house: *"And Nathan said to the king, Go, do all*

*departed from them, and the LORD is with us: fear them not"* (Num 14:9). A servant of king Saul observed of **David**, *"The Lord is with him"* (1 Sam 16:18). Azariah the prophet said to king **Asa**, *"The LORD is with you, while ye be with Him"* (2 Chr 15:2). David observed of **helpful friends**, *"Behold, God is mine helper: the Lord is with them that uphold my soul"* (Psa 54:4). **Jeremiah** the prophet observed, *"But the LORD is with me as a mighty terrible one"* (Jer 20:11).

This, then, is the announcement of the blessing of the Lord being upon an individual – favor that is evidenced by all things being worked together for the good of the person. God approves of the manner in which they are living, and the work in which they are engaged. **God being with a person affords both protection and provision.** What a marvelous salutation – the announcement of God's approval of, and beneficence toward Mary!

#### BLESSED ART THOU AMONG WOMEN

*" . . . blessed art thou among women."*

Another version read, *"Blessed (favored of God) are you before all other women!"* <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup> Most versions omit this phrase. Those retaining it include the following: KING JAMES, NEW KING JAMS, DARBY, DOUAY, MURDOCK, BISHOP'S, WEBSTER'S, REVISED WEBSTER, TYNDALE, YOUNG'S LITERAL, APOSTOLIC BIBLE POLYGOT, ENGLISH MAJORITY, JUBILEE BIBLE, LITERAL TRANSLATION, AMPLIFIED.

In my judgment, there is no sound basis for eliminating these words. The words *"thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee"* certainly suggest this kind of blessing. Also, they are the precise words said to her by Elizabeth when they first came together: *"Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb"* (Luke 1:42). All of the versions contain these words. This was also said of a discerning woman who heard Jesus speak *"And it came to pass, as He spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked"* (Luke 11:27). As Jesus

**As Jesus point out, however, the greatest blessing was not realized in giving birth to Him, but rather in hearing Him and retaining His words. I accept the words of this text without reservation.**

being applied to Mary, <sup>DOUAY/TNT</sup> I do not believe this is proper. Only Jesus is said to be *"full of grace"* (John 1:14). The American Standard Version, Revised Standard Version, English Revised Version, New Revised Standard Version, and English Standard Version (with several others) read that Stephen

*that is in thine heart; for the LORD is with thee"* (2 Sam 7:3). Joshua and Caleb sought to reason with the unbelieving Israelites after the twelve spies had spied out the land: *"Only rebel not ye against the LORD, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is*

point out, however, the greatest blessing was not realized in giving birth to Him, but rather in hearing Him and retaining His words. I accept the words of this text without reservation.

One final word of objection on this matter – that is, the unwarranted omission of the words, *“blessed art thou among women.”* Here is the only woman

in the history of humanity who conceived a child through the power of the Holy Spirit. She is the only *“virgin,”* in every sense of that word, who ever had a child. She is the only person in all of history that was related to Jesus according to the flesh – His *“mother”* – as the Spirit refers to her no less than twenty times (Matt 1:18; 2:11,13,14, 20,21; 12:46; 13:55; Mk 3:31; Lk 2:33,34,43,48,51;

8:19; John 2:5,12; 19:25,26; Acts 1:14). What kind of professed scholar would, therefore, think it appropriate to omit this from the text of Scripture? Men who feel free to tamper with the text of Scripture are not to be trusted, and certainly not held out as true scholars. They are really presumptuous and self-willed (2 Pet 2:10), and they are not to be trusted.

## SHE WAS TROUBLED AT HIS SAYING

*“<sup>29</sup> And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.”*

### WHEN SHE SAW HIM

*“And when she saw him . . .”* Most of the versions leave out these words. But they are certainly in order, for it says that *“the angel came in to her”* suggesting that his presence was detected. When this same angel appeared to Zacharias, he was seen standing on the right side of the altar of incense, and Zacharias saw him (Lk 1:11-12). It certainly is not stretching the truth to say that Mary saw him also. An angel appeared to Moses (Ex 3:2; Acts 7:30). Prior to his birth, an angel appeared to Samson’s mother (Judges 13:3). Balaam saw an angel (Num 22:31). Gideon saw an angel (Judges 6:22). David saw an angel (2 Sam 24:17; 1 Chron 21:16). Cornelius

saw an angel (Acts 10:3). John saw an angel (Rev 5:2). It does seem reasonable to assume Mary actually saw Gabriel, understanding that there had been some kind of accommodation to the human condition –for angels are spirits (Psa 104:4), which cannot be perceived by the human eye.

### SHE WAS TROUBLED AT THE SAYING

*“ . . . she was troubled at his saying . . .”* Other versions read, *“greatly troubled at his statement,”* <sup>NASB</sup> *“perplexed by his words,”* <sup>NIV</sup> *“confused by his words,”* <sup>CEB</sup> *“deeply troubled,”* <sup>CJB</sup> *“startled,”* <sup>GWN</sup> *“deeply disturbed,”* <sup>NJB</sup> *“confused and disturbed,”* <sup>NLT</sup> *“abashed,”* <sup>TNT</sup> *“very disturbed,”* <sup>IE</sup> *“greatly agitated,”* <sup>WEYMOUTH</sup> *“deeply perturbed,”* <sup>PHILLIPS</sup> *“thoroughly shaken,”* <sup>MESSAGE</sup> and *“greatly troubled and disturbed and confused.”* <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

This was not the response of

terror, that constrains the individual to withdraw, and move away. To be visited by an angel was certainly an epoch, and yet the fact that there was no human explanation of the reason for it caused Mary to be troubled.

### SHE CAST IN HER MIND

*“ . . . and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.”*

It was not the appearance of the angel that troubled her, but how he had addressed her – the *“manner of salutation.”* *“Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women”* (Luke 1:28). Being one who feared the Lord, and of a humble and holy demeanor, **this was not the way Mary viewed herself.** Yet, she recognizes that this is not the assessment of one of her peers, but is rather God’s own perspective of her. What, then, could this mean?

## THOU HAST FOUND FAVOR WITH GOD

*“<sup>30</sup> And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God.”*

### FEAR NOT, MARY

*“And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary . . .”*

The words *“Fear not”* have often been spoken to people on earth. These include Abram (Gen 21:17), Isaac (Gen 26:24), Jacob (Gen 46:3), Joshua

(Josh 8:1), Gideon (Judges 6:23), Daniel (Dan 10:12), Joseph (Matt 1:20), the women who came to the tomb of Jesus (Matt 28:5), Zacharias (Lk 1:13), Mary (Lk 1:30), the shepherds at Jesus’ birth (Lk 2:10), Simon Peter (Lk 5:10), Jairus (Lk 8:50), the twelve disciples (Lk 12:32), Paul (Acts 27:24), and John (Rev 1:17).

There is such a stark contrast between heaven and earth, and

between personalities from heaven and men, that the cognizance of someone from heaven causes fear to rise in the hearts of men and women – even holy men and women.

**In our time there has been an erosion of this kind of fear – not because men have become accustomed to God, but because there is very little being said by anyone that, in the minds of the hearers, is being associated with**

the God of heaven. While it is true that much of this is owing to men not having ears to hear, **it seems to me that we are living in a generation to whom God is not saying very much** – such as some of the generations of the past. There are historic civilizations that have had no word from God directed to them–i.e. all of the nations before Israel, and most of the ones after Israel, saving for those against whom the prophets prophesied.

When Jesus walked among men, He confined His public ministry to Israel. Even then, His word was concealed from the masses of the people of that generation (Matt 11:16-20; 12:41-42; Mk 8:12; Lk 7:31-35; Lk 11:49-51).

**THOU HAST FOUND FAVOR WITH GOD**

*“ . . . for thou hast found favor*

*with God.”*

Other versions read, “*you have God’s approval,*” <sup>BBE</sup> “*God is honoring you,*” <sup>CEB</sup> “*thou hast found grace with God*” <sup>DOUAY</sup> “*you have won God’s favor*” <sup>NJB</sup> “*God has decided to wonderfully bless you!*” <sup>LIVING</sup> “*God is pleased with you,*” <sup>CEV</sup> “*God is very pleased with you,*” <sup>ERV</sup> “*God has been gracious to you,*” <sup>GNB</sup> “*you have gained God’s approval,*” <sup>GOODSPEED</sup> “*God has a surprise for you,*” <sup>MESSAGE</sup> and “*you have found grace (free, spontaneous, absolute favor and loving-kindness) with God.*” <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

Some of the versions wholly misrepresent this verse–i.e. “*you have won God’s favor,*” <sup>NJB</sup> “*God is very pleased with you,*” <sup>CEV</sup> and “*you have gained God’s approval.*” <sup>GOODSPEED</sup> This is a serious misrepresentation.

**This visitation was not a reward for the godly manner in which Mary had lived.** It was not in answer to a special petition from her. God was moved by His own will toward Mary, and that itself was a magnanimous display of His grace and favor.

I do not doubt that Mary had received special attention from the angelic order until this time. Hundreds of years before this, God had revealed He would send the Savior into the world through a virgin (Isa 7:14). Just as angels are sent forth to “*minister for them who SHALL be heirs of salvation,*” **so they must have no doubt encamped about Mary to deliver her from evil, even though she may not have been aware of it.** As it is written, “*The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them*” (Psa 34:7).

## THOU SHALT CONCEIVE IN THY WOMB

<sup>31</sup> **And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.”**

**BEHOLD**

*“And, behold . . .”*

Other versions read, “*and now,*” <sup>NRSV</sup> “*and see,*” <sup>BBE</sup> “*Look!*” <sup>CEB</sup> “*now listen,*” <sup>CSB</sup> “*for lo,*” <sup>MRD</sup> “*very soon now.*” <sup>LIVING</sup>

The lexical meaning of the word translated “*Behold*” is, “*GIVING A PECULIAR VIVACITY TO THE STYLE BY BIDDING THE READER OR HEARER TO ATTEND TO WHAT IS SAID,*” <sup>STRONGS</sup> **BEHOLD! SEE! LO! . . . WHEN A THING IS SPECIFIED WHICH IS UNEXPECTED YET SURE . . . WHEN A THING IS SPECIFIED WHICH SEEMS IMPOSSIBLE AND YET OCCURS,” <sup>THAYER</sup> “*SEE, PERCEIVE, LOOK AT,*” <sup>FRIBERG</sup> AND “*LOOK, LISTEN, PAY ATTENTION,*” <sup>LOUW-NIDA</sup>**

**When the Lord speaks through one of His messengers, what is said is intended to be heard and comprehended.** Men may chatter, but the Lord does not. He requires the attention of those He is addressing – the focused attention. **It is not possible**

for God to say something that is unimportant or irrelevant.

Accenting that the Lord has a lot to say, all of which is intended to be heard, the word “*behold*” is mentioned 1,326 times in Scripture.

**THOU SHALT CONCEIVE IN THY**

(Gen19:36-37), and Jephthah, the son of an harlot (Judges 11:1). Some also include Ishmael (Gen 16:3,15), and David’s son through Bathsheba (2 Sam 11:2-5). The Law of God specified, “*A bastard shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD; even to his tenth generation shall he not enter into the congregation of the LORD*” (Deut

**Accenting that the Lord has a lot to say, all of which is intended to be heard, the word “behold” is mentioned 1,326 times in Scripture.**

**WOMB**

*“ . . . thou shalt conceive in thy womb . . .”*

Remember, Mary is “*espoused*” to Joseph – engaged or betrothed. The child of an unmarried woman is called a “*bastard*” in Scripture. Scriptural men that call into this category include Moab and Ammon, the sons of Lot’s daughters through their father

23:2).

Being a devout woman, Mary knew all of these things.

**AND BRING FORTH A SON  
AND SHALT CALL HIS NAME JESUS**

*“ . . . and bring forth a son, and shalt call His name JESUS.”*

Notice, that the more a matter is

related to the will of the Lord, the more specific things become. Gabriel tells Mary she is going to conceive in her woman, she would give birth to a son, and she was to *"call His name JESUS,"* the Greek equivalent of Joshua. The meaning of the names *"Joshua"* and *"Jesus"* is "JEHOVAH IS SALVATION," STRONG'S "WHOSE HELP IS JEHOVAH," THAYER "SAVIOR," LIDDELL-SCOTT "SAVIOR;"

DELIVERER," HITCHCOCK "SALVATION OF JEHOVAH," FAUSSET "THE HELP OF JAH, OR SAVIOR," SMITH'S "YAHWEH IS SALVATION," ISBE

As you can see, it is nearly impossible to identify precisely what the name *"Jesus"* means. **Exactness is by no means found in the field of etymology.** The general meaning obviously has to do with God bringing salvation, which is the ultimate "help."

Jesus is specifically related to salvation.

**This being so, salvation rests solely in a Person – not in Law, or a procedure, or even a plan.** Jesus is the embodiment and definition of the salvation of God. Whatever salvation does will be accomplished by Jesus Christ, and there will be no salvation that is not strictly supervised by Him.

## HE SHALL BE GREAT

*"<sup>32</sup> He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: <sup>33</sup> And He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end."*

The things Gabriel now declares are tied to the birth of Jesus – when He came into the world. They are not prophecies of His Second Coming, when He will come in all of His glory, with no further identity with Mary. What Gabriel here reveals is highly disruptive to great bodies of commonly-accepted theological positions.

### HE SHALL BE GREAT

*"He shall be great . . ."*

Other versions read, *"very great,"* NLT *"a great man,"* GWN and *"great (eminent)."* AMPLIFIED

The lexical meaning of the word translated *"great"* is, "GREAT – OF THE EXTERNAL FORM OR SENSIBLE APPEARANCE OF THINGS (OR OF PERSONS) . . . MIGHTY, STRONG; PREDICATED OF RANK, AS BELONGING TO PERSONS, EMINENT FOR ABILITY, VIRTUE, AUTHORITY; THINGS ESTEEMED HIGHLY FOR THEIR IMPORTANCE: OF GREAT MOMENT, OF GREAT WEIGHT, IMPORTANCE; A THING TO BE HIGHLY ESTEEMED FOR ITS EXCELLENCE; EXCELLENT; SPLENDID; OF THINGS WHICH OVERSTEP THE PROVINCE OF A CREATED BEING." THAYER

Jesus is expressly referred to as *"the Shadow of a GREAT Rock in a weary land"* (Isa 32:2), a *"GREAT Light"* (Matt 4:16), *"a GREAT Prophet"* (Lk 7:16), "the GREAT God and our Savior" (Tit 2:13), "a GREAT High Priest" (Heb 4:14), and "that GREAT

**Jesus excels in glory, power, authority, rank, ability, importance, strength, and value. No one should expect small of average things from Jesus. "He shall be great!"**

Shepherd of the sheep" (Heb 13:20).

Jesus excels in glory, power, authority, rank, ability, importance, strength, and value. **No one should expect small of average things from Jesus. "He shall be great!"** Jesus does not get wrapped up in the mundane, absorbed with the temporal, and found majoring on the things of this world. **"He shall be great!"**

### HE SHALL BE CALLED THE SON OF THE HIGHEST

*" . . . and shall be called the Son of the Highest . . ."*

Other versions read, *"the Son of the Most High,"* NASB *"the Son of God,"* LIVING and *"Son of the Most High God."* ERV

### The Son of the Highest

This is the loftiest view of Jesus' humanity. In this expression **He is identified with God, and it is His fundamental nature that is addressed.** The emphasis is placed upon **who sent Him** into the world. This is how He must be seen before men can be saved.

⇒ *"The Son of the Highest"* (1 time).  
⇒ *"The Son of God"* (44 times).  
⇒ *"The Son of the Living God"* (2 times).

⇒ *"The Son of the Blessed"* (1 time).  
⇒ *"The Son of the Father"* (2 John 1:3).

### Viewed Prophetically

⇒ *"The Son of David"* (16 times). Jesus is the

### Viewed from His Identity with Men

⇒ *"The Son of Man"* (87 times).

### As Some Men Saw Him

⇒ *"The Son of Mary"* (1 time). While Mary was the mother of Jesus (John 2:1,3; Acts 1:14), that is not how He is to be identified.

⇒ *"The Son of Joseph"* (3 times). This was wholly improper, and it is carefully stated that this was *"as was supposed"* (Lk 3:22).

### THE LORD GOD WILL GIVE TO HIM THE THRONE OF HIS FATHER DAVID

*" . . . and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David . . ."*

⇒ That this would take place was prophesied by Isaiah: *"Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish*

*it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this" (Isa 9:7).*

⇒ The Psalmist also wrote of this: *"The LORD hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne"*(Psa 132:11).

⇒ Jeremiah prophesied of this: *"Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth."* (Jer 23:5). *"In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land"*(Jer 33:15). Peter preached this on the day of Pentecost: *"Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, He would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh*

⇒ Ezekiel prophesied of this. *"And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them"* (Ezek 37:24). *"And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them"* (Ezek 37:24). *"And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. And I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the LORD have spoken it"* (Ezek 34:23-24).

The promise to Mary, the prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah, and the declaration of Peter on the Day of Pentecost ALL applied to *"the day of salvation"* in which we are now living (2 Cor 6:1-2). These do not have to do with the second coming of Christ, in which He is being alleged to set up a kingdom. He has already set up the Kingdom. That is why it is called *"the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and*

house of Jacob (which the church is never called), the Christ who is presently exalted will do this from heaven when He lifts the veil from the hearts, and they call upon the name of the Lord (2 Cor 3:16; Lk 13:35; Rom 11:15-27).

#### OF HIS KINGDOM THERE SHALL BE NO END

*" . . . and of His kingdom there shall be no end."*

These are the exact prophetic words of Isaiah (Isa 9:7) – and they have to do with the birth of Jesus, not with His return *"the second time."*

Jesus is presently ruling the Kingdom, which rule shall never end. At this present time He is appropriately described as *"the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honor and power everlasting. Amen."* (1 Tim 6:15-16).

If it appears as though He is not ruling, know **there is no personality anywhere in heaven, on the earth, or under the earth, that is not presently subject tp Him** (Matt 28:18; Phil 2:9-10; 1 Pet 3:22). The purpose for His present reign is to bring many sons to glory (Heb 2:10). He has already personally defeated all of His enemies (Heb 2:13; Col 2:15) – even the *"last enemy,"* which is death (1 Cir 15:26). This circumstance is why nothing can separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus(Rom 8:35-38). It is because the Lord's Christ is reigning. Everyone in heaven knows it. The devil and his hosts know it. Only men are not bowing now to Jesus! O, that men knew it!

**If it appears as though He is not ruling, know there is no personality anywhere in heaven, on the earth, or under the earth, that is not presently subject tp Him**

*did see corruption"* (Acts 2:30-31).

#### HE SHALL REIGN OVER THE HOUSE OF JACOB FOR EVER

*" . . . And He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever . . ."*

*Savior Jesus Christ"* (2 Pet 1:11). Isaiah related it to the Messiah being given as a *"Son"* and a *"Child"* (Isa 9:6). Peter related it to Christ's present exaltation, and to Him being made both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36).

As to Jesus reigning over the

### HOW SHALL THIS BE

*" 34 Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know*

*not a man?"*

**HOW CAN THIS BE**  
*"Then said Mary unto the angel,*

How shall this be . . . .”

Other versions read, “How can this be?” <sup>NKJV</sup> “How will this be,” <sup>NIV</sup> “How shall this be?” <sup>RSV</sup> “How may this be,” <sup>BBE</sup> “How will this happen,” <sup>CEB</sup> “How can this be,” <sup>CJB</sup> “How shall this be done,” <sup>DOUAY</sup> “But how can this come about,” <sup>NJB</sup> and “But how can I have a baby?” <sup>LIVING</sup>

Several versions read “How CAN this be” (NKJV, NASB, NRSV, CJB, CSB, MRD, NAB, NJB, NLT, LIVING, WEYMOUTH, ISV, WILLIAMS, MONTGOMERY, AMPLIFIED). This is not a proper rendering of the text.

A literal reading would be: “How” (IN WHAT WAY, BY WHAT MEANS, AFTER WHAT MANNER), “shall” (FUTURE, TO BE, SHALL BE, SHALL COME TO PASS).

There is a lot of difference between asking “how can,” and “how shall,” or “how will.” The first expression carries the savor of doubt. The later is an inquiry concerning how the promise will be accomplished, which was driven by faith, not doubt.

Some have compared the inquiry of Zacharias with that of Mary, and wondered why such different answers were given.

Zacharias asked, “Whereby shall I know this,” <sup>KJV</sup> (Lk 1:18), “How shall I know this?” <sup>NKJV</sup> “How shall I know this for certain?” <sup>NASB</sup> “How can I be sure of this?” <sup>NIV</sup> “How may I be certain of this?” <sup>BBE</sup> “What proof is there for this?” <sup>GWN</sup> and “By what shall I know and be sure of this?” <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

There is doubt and unbelief in the query of Zacharias, for Gabriel responded “thou **believest not** my words.” Now we behold the difference in the response of Mary. It is a difference that is dictated by believing.

SEEING I KNOW NOT A MAN  
“ . . . seeing I know not a man?”

ask in prayer, believing, **ye shall receive.**” (Matt 21:22)

**With Mary, this was not a question of possibility, but of morality. She seemed to sense that this birth could not be accomplished in the natural way, so she inquired how it was going to be accomplished.**

With Mary, this was not a question of possibility, but of morality. She seemed to sense that this birth could not be accomplished in the natural way, so she inquired how it was going to be accomplished.

There is certainly room for more of this kind of thinking today. When asking the Lord to do the impossible, we must not sprinkle words of doubt upon our petition, but rather seek to know HOW impossible things can be accomplished, not IF they can.

In the matter of prayer, answers have been given to us.

⇒ “Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and **ye shall have them.**” (Mark 11:24)

⇒ “Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, **it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.**” (Matt 18:19)

⇒ “And all things, whatsoever ye shall

⇒ “And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, **that will I do**, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. **If ye shall ask any thing in My name, I will do it.**” (John 14:13-14).

⇒ “And **whatsoever we ask, we receive of him**, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.” (1 John 3:22)

⇒ “If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, **and it shall be done unto you.**” (John 15:7)

⇒ “And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, **we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.**” (1 John 5:14-15)

In such matters we can follow the example of Zacharias, or that of Mary. Doubt drives one answer, while believing drives the other. One is not yet convinced God will work, the other is convinced He will, and is desirous to know as much about it as possible.

## THE POWER OF THE HIGHEST SHALL OVERSHADOW THEE

“ <sup>35</sup> And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the

**Son of God."**

We have now been brought beyond the circumference of human experience. Here is a means of conception that is so far removed from human experience that the only way we can receive it to believe what has been said. We do not even know what questions to ask, much less what the answer to them might be. Even more

This is the angel's explanation for how Mary will conceive a child without the involvement of any man or other fellow-mortal.

**THE POWER OF THE HIGHEST SHALL OVERSHADOW THEE**

" . . . and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee . . . "

Other versions read "will come to

seen in the creation, when "the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" (Gen 1:2). Other versions read, "hovering over the face of the waters," NKJV "brooding over the dark vapors," LIVING "bore upon the water," ABP "brooded like a bird above the watery abyss," MESSAGE "fluttering on the face of the waters," YLT "The Spirit of God was moving (hovering, brooding) over the face of the waters." AMPLIFIED

Just as the Holy Spirit brooded upon the face of the deep, preparing for the creation of all things, so He overshadowed Mary, preparing a body through which the Word would become flesh, and dwell among men.

The meaning, as I understand it, is that the conception of the Holy Child would be accomplished wholly by the Holy Spirit. **Nothing of nature would be employed, except the womb of Mary – the place where the Holy Child would reside until born.** The body of Jesus would be a special creation – a body that was "prepared" by God for Him (Heb 10:5).

**THAT HOLY THING WHICH SHALL BE BORN OF THEE**

" . . . therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee . . . "

Other versions read "Holy One," NKJV "Holy Offspring," NASB "the Child to be born will be holy," NRSV "that which will come to birth" BBE "therefore the child to be born<sup>1</sup> will be called holy," ESV "the baby to be born will be holy," NLT "the holy-begotten thing," YLT "the holy-begotten thing," YLT "holy baby," IE "the child will be holy," ISV "your child will be called holy," WILLIAMS and the holy (pure, sinless) Thing (Offspring)." AMPLIFIED

One might wonder why the text refers to "Holy thing." The word is expressed in the neuter gender, without regard to being male or female. **The reason for this, as I see it, is that the One for whom this body was being prepared – the One who was being "made flesh," was "The Word" – which was neither male nor female.** You will remember that when Adam and Eve were created it is said of them, "This is

**The meaning, as I understand it, is that the conception of the Holy Child would be accomplished wholly by the Holy Spirit. Nothing of nature would be employed, except the womb of Mary – the place where the Holy Child would reside until born.**

than that, **this is what Mary is required to believe** – and that is what she will do. You see, when it comes to having involvements with God, **there comes a time when all you will be able to do is simply believe what has been said.** You will not be able to provide an explanation that is satisfactory to the worldly-wise.

**THE HOLY GHOST SHALL COME UPON THEE**

"And the angel answered and said unto her, *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee . . .*"

Other versions read, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you," NKJV "The Holy Spirit will come over you" CEV "The Holy Spirit will come to you," GWN "The Holy Spirit will come down to you." CEV

We are dealing here with such a remarkable work, that the translators could find other way to say it. **This is simply something that cannot be explained with human vocabulary, similes, or parables.** Here something is made to occur on the earth, and in a woman – yet it is something only Deity can accomplish. Faith, however, can accept this with no difficulty.

rest on you," BBE "will cover you," CJB/ISV/ERV "will cover you with its shadow," NJB "will over you," CEV "will surround you," ISV "hover over you," MESSAGE "will overshadow you [like a shining cloud]." AMPLIFIED all other versions that I have read "overshadow."

The lexical meaning of the word "overshadow" is as follows: "TO THROW A SHADOW UPON, TO ENVELOP IN SHADOW, TO OVERSHADOW: FROM A VAPOROUS CLOUD THAT CASTS A SHADOW THE WORD IS TRANSFERRED TO A SHINING CLOUD SURROUNDING AND ENVELOPING PERSONS WITH BRIGHTNESS: MATT. 17:5; LUKE 9:34; MARK 9:7. TROPICALLY, OF THE HOLY SPIRIT EXERTING CREATIVE ENERGY UPON THE WOMB OF THE VIRGIN MARY AND IMPREGNATING IT (A USE OF THE WORD WHICH SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN DRAWN FROM THE FAMILIAR O. T. IDEA OF A CLOUD AS SYMBOLIZING THE IMMEDIATE PRESENCE AND POWER OF GOD)." THAYER

In the above meaning, the Scripture references (Matt. 17:5; Luke 9:34; Mark 9:7) are the record of Jesus' transfiguration, where a bright cloud is said to have "overshadowed" Peter, James, and John. Our text, however, is speaking of the Person of the Holy Spirit. In English, as it is used here, "overshadow" means "TO BE GREATER IN IMPORTANCE THAN." MERRIAM-WEBSTER

The most precise parallel must be



*‘the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him; Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created’* (Gen 5:1-2). In other words, it took two differing personalities to most precisely express God in a human form.

God.”

⇒ The expression “*Son of God*,” as exclusively used of Jesus, is used forty-seven times in Scripture (Dan 3:25; Matt 4:3,6; 8:29; 14:33; 26:63; 27:40,43,54; Mk 1:1; 3:11; 15:39; Lk 1:35; 4:3,9,41; 8:28; 22:70; John 1:34,49; 3:18; 5:25; 9:35; 10:36; 11:4,27; 19:7; 20:31; Acts

*of the Father*” (2 John 1:3).

⇒ Eighteen times He is referred to as “*the Son*” (Psa 2:12; Matt 28:19; John 3:35; 5:19,20,21,23,26; 6:40; 8:35,36; John 14:13; Heb 7:28; 1 John 2:22,23,24; 4:14).  
⇒ Jesus is referred to as God’s “*only begotten Son*” John 1:14,18; 3:16,18; Heb 11:17; 1 John 4:9).

**While it is important that we see Christ’s necessary identity with humanity, it is even more vital that we comprehend His Deity – His relation to the Father.**

However, when it came to the Word being made flesh, only one Person was required, and in Him the “*fulness of the Godhead*” would dwell “*bodily*” (Col 2:9). Such a work is completely outside human experience. If God did not do this, it could not possibly have taken place. That is something to be believed, not questioned, and not philosophized.

**SHALL BE CALLED THE SON OF GOD**

“ . . . shall be called the Son of God.”

Other versions read “God’s Son,”

CEB/IE All other versions read “Son of

8:38; 9:20; Rom 1:4; 1 Cor 1:19; Gal 2:20; Eph 4:13; Heb 4:14; 6:6; 7:3; 10:29; 1 John 3:8; 4:15; 5:5,10,12,13,20; Rev 2:18).

⇒ Twice He is called “*the Son of the Living God*” (Matt 16:16; John 6:69).

⇒ Once He is called “*the Son of the Blessed*” (Mk 14:61).

⇒ Four times God referred to Him as “*My Son*” (Psa 2:7; Acts 13:33; Heb 1:5; 5:5).

⇒ Once He is referred to as “*the Son*

Remember, John wrote this book in order that we might believe “*that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God*.”

While Jesus referred to Himself as “*the Son of man*” eighty four times, Stephen also referred to Him in that way (Acts 7:54), and John twice called Him that (Rev 1:13; 14:14), **the preeminent identity of Jesus is that of Him being “the Son of God.”** God Himself twice spoke from heaven, referring to Jesus as “*My Beloved Son*” (Matt 3:17; 17:5).

**While it is important that we see Christ’s necessary identity with humanity, it is even more vital that we comprehend His Deity – His relation to the Father.** That is what makes His identity with men productive in the fulfillment of God’s great salvation – and it is to be believed with zeal.

## THY COUSIN ELIZABETH

“<sup>36</sup> And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren.”

Who is able to measure the grandness of fellowship with those who have themselves tasted of the Lord, and experienced the working of the Almighty? Now we will see that it is the manner of the Lord to draw such people together, that will draw out of one another magnificent and insightful expressions.

**THY COUSIN ELIZABETH**

“And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth...”

Other versions read, “*your relative*,” <sup>NKJV</sup> “*your kinswoman*,” <sup>RSV</sup> “*who is of your family*,” <sup>BBE</sup> “*your aunt*.” <sup>LIVING</sup> Most versions read “*relative*,” while the following versions read “*cousin*” – KJV, DOUAY, GENEVA, NJB, PNT, RWB, TNT, WEB, MESSAGE. only provide this information to confirm that there is some etymological basis for using the word “*cousin*.”

The lexical meaning of the word translated “*cousin*” is “OF THE SAME KIN, AKIN TO, RELATED BY BLOOD 2) IN A WIDER SENSE, OF THE SAME RACE, A FELLOW COUNTRYMAN” <sup>THAYER</sup>

### CONCERNING THE USE OF THE WORD “cousin”

“A QUESTION ARISES, HOW ELISABETH, WHO WAS OF THE DAUGHTERS OF AARON, (VER. 5,) AND MARY, WHO WAS DESCENDED FROM THE STOCK OF DAVID, COULD BE COUSINS. THIS APPEARS TO BE AT VARIANCE WITH THE LAW, WHICH PROHIBITED WOMEN FROM MARRYING INTO A DIFFERENT TRIBE FROM THEIR OWN, (NUMBERS 36:6.) WITH RESPECT TO THE LAW, IF WE LOOK AT ITS OBJECT, IT FORBODE THOSE INTERMARRIAGES ONLY WHICH MIGHT “REMOVE INHERITANCES FROM TRIBE TO TRIBE,” (NUMBERS 36:7.) NO SUCH DANGER EXISTED, IF ANY WOMAN OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH MARRIED A PRIEST, TO WHOM AN INHERITANCE COULD NOT BE CONVEYED. THE SAME ARGUMENT WOULD HOLD IF A WOMAN OF THE TRIBE OF LEVI PASSED INTO ANOTHER TRIBE. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE MOTHER OF THE HOLY VIRGIN MIGHT BE DESCENDED FROM THE FAMILY OF AARON, AND SO HER DAUGHTER MIGHT BE COUSIN TO ELISABETH.”

It also should be noted that the Jews, because of their origin and Divine selection, considered everyone in their nation their “*kinsmen*”—i.e. Paul (Rom 9:3; 16:7,21). A close relative would be called “*next kinsmen*” (Ruth 2:20). At any rate, I do not believe this is viewing relatives with the kind of scrutiny with which we are familiar.

**SHE HAD CONCEIVED**

“ . . . she hath also conceived a son in her old age . . . ”

Here is one of Mary’s relatives as,

precious souls are often very difficult to find. **That was the kind of era in which Mary and Elizabeth found themselves** – when most of the people were sitting in darkness (Matt 4:16).

**THIS IS THE SIXTH MONTH WITH HER**  
“ . . . and this is the sixth month with her . . . ”

Elizabeth hid herself for five months, and by now there was no question about whether or not she was carrying a child. As soon as Mary sees her, what Gabriel has told her will be

May you be the kind of person that insightful souls will immediately recognize as members of the household of God!

**WHO WAS CALLED BARREN**

“ . . . who was called barren.”

Other versions read, “*said to be barren,*” <sup>NRSV</sup> “*who was without children,*” <sup>BBE</sup> “*was labeled ‘unable to conceive’*” <sup>CEB</sup> “*everyone says she is barren,*” <sup>CJB</sup> “*was called childless*” <sup>CSB</sup> “*People said she couldn’t have a child*” <sup>GWN</sup> “*‘the barren one,’ they called her,*” <sup>LIVING</sup> “*The woman who could not have a baby,*” <sup>IE</sup> “*being called sterile,*” <sup>ABP</sup> “*No one thought she could ever have a baby,*” <sup>CEV</sup> “*It is said that she cannot have children.*” <sup>GNB</sup>

Elizabeth really was “*barren,*” and everyone knew it. The Holy Spirit has already informed us that Zacharias and Elizabeth “*had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years*” (Luke 1:7). This was, then, a very real condition, and not simply the opinion of the people who knew them. Further, they knew that Elizabeth’s childishness was simply not a preference. **She belonged to a body of people whose bloodline was critical. No devout Jewish woman was content to remain childless, for that could mean that her husband’s lineage could die out.**

Notice also the scope of Gabriel’s knowledge, and the manner in which he handled it. I do not know if he had received a commandment to so direct Mary or not. **However, I should not be surprised if he knew how to proceed with his mission without deviating from the purpose of God.** That could be classified as “*the wisdom of an angel*” (2 Sam 14:20). Now, Gabriel continues to buttress the faith of Mary.

**While the Scriptures do minister “comfort” to the faithful who are exposed to them (Rom 15:4), the blessing of others in whom the work of the Lord is taking place, and is known, is in beyond all estimation in its effects.**

apparently well known to her, who has also experienced the working of the Lord. Mary no doubt had no kindred spirit who could appreciate the blessing she had received, which was not at all common. Of course, their Scriptures had accounts of such miraculous births as Elizabeth was to experience, and at least one which also involved a woman of advanced age. **While the Scriptures do minister “comfort” to the faithful who are exposed to them (Rom 15:4), the blessing of others in whom the work of the Lord is taking place, and is known, is in beyond all estimation in its effects.**

Of course, during a period of great falling away from the faith, such

confirmed. She will not have to ask any questions concerning whether or not Elizabeth was expecting.

**There are some people who are carrying about more evidence of Divine working than others.** With some people, you just are not sure whether they are walking in the light or sitting in the dark. If they are really alive, a diligent and insightful search will discover their state. However, bless God, there are others who you know immediately that they are alive to God. Admittedly, this kind of people do not appear to be in great number. There are whole congregations that appear to have very few of this kind of people – and maybe, even none at all.

**WITH GOD NOTHING SHALL BE IMPOSSIBLE**

“ <sup>37</sup> **For with God nothing shall be impossible.**”

There is a reason why Gabriel speaks as he does, and he apparently desires Mary to have a full assurance of

what he has told her. While it seems very obvious to say, Gabriel’s heart was in his work – a trait of God’s servants.

## FOR

*"For . . ."*

Other versions read, *"because,"*  
DOUAY *and "but."* GWN

The lexical meaning of the word translated *"for"* is, "THE REASON WHY ANYTHING IS SAID TO BE OR TO BE DONE, BECAUSE, SINCE, FOR THAT." THAYER "BECAUSE, SINCE, FOR (THIS REASON), USED TO INTRODUCE A CAUSE OR REASON BASED ON AN EVIDENT FACT." FRIBERG

It is God's manner to trace things back to their cause. Therefore we read expressions like:

⇒ *"But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: **FOR** hath prepared for them a city"* (Heb 11:16).

⇒ *"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: **FOR** he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee"* (Heb 13:5).

⇒ *"And He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, **BECAUSE** He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God"* (Rom 8:27).

⇒ *"And **BECAUSE** ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father"* (Gal 4:6).

This is the perspective that edifies, encourages, and strengthens

**In order for the soul to be properly prepared for the working of the Lord, the One who does he work must take the precedence in thought above the work itself.**

the soul – the underlying reason for the declared benefit.

## WITH GOD

*" . . . with God . . ."*

In order for the soul to be properly prepared for the working of the Lord, the One who does he work must take the precedence in thought above the work itself. Rather than riveting our attention on what is to be done, let us fasten our eyes on the One who will be doing it.

## NOTHING SHALL BE IMPOSSIBLE

*" . . . nothing shall be impossible."*

Other versions read, *"no word from God shall be void of power,"* ASV *"there is nothing which God is not able to do,"* BBE *"nothing is difficult for God,"* MRD *"no promise from God will be impossible of fulfillment,"* WEYMOUTH *"no word shall be impossible with God,"* DARBY *"God can do anything!"* ERV *"Nothing is impossible with respect to any of God's promises,"* ISV and *"For with God nothing is ever impossible and*

*no word from God shall be without power or impossible of fulfillment."*  
AMPLIFIED

The word translated *"impossible"* has the following lexical meaning: "NOT TO HAVE STRENGTH, TO BE WEAK; ALWAYS SO OF PERSONS IN CLASSIC GREEK B. A THING CANNOT BE DONE, IS IMPOSSIBLE," THAYER "BE POWERLESS, BE UNABLE; ONLY IMPERSONALLY IN THE NT BE IMPOSSIBLE," FRIBERG "PERTAINING TO NOT BEING ABLE TO DO OR EXPERIENCE SOMETHING - 'INCAPABLE, NOT BEING ABLE.'" LOUW-NIDA The translation *"no word from God shall be void of power,"* is based upon the Septuagint Version. THAYER I personally think it neutralizes what is being said by Gabriel.

If the saint of God is going to overcome, and remain in possession of "everlasting consolation and good hope" (2 Thess 2:16), he must be brought to comprehend and accept this basic postulate – that **with God, nothing is impossible**. Only then will he be able to say, *"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me"* (Phil 4:13). Only then will the expression *"I know"* become common.

## BEHOLD THE HANDMAID OF THE LORD

<sup>38</sup> *And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her."*

## BEHOLD THE HANDMAID OF THE LORD

*"And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord . . ."*

Other versions read, *"Behold the*

*maidservant of the Lord,"* NKJV *"Behold the bondslave of the Lord,"* NASB *"I am the Lord's servant,"* NIV *"Here am I, the servant of the Lord,"* NRSV *"I am the Lord's slave,"* CSB *"Behold the bondmaid of the Lord,"* DARBY and *"I am the servant girl of the Lord."* LIVING

By saying these words, Mary was affirming that she was willing and ready to be used by God in any way He

desired. She abandoned her will for God's will – which is the mode of life in Christ Jesus (Phil 3:7-14) – a mode that was established by the Savior Himself: *"not My will, but Thine, be done."* (Luke 22:42).

There you see the spiritual stature of Mary – as yet, unmarried, yet a virgin. Once she knew how this was going to be accomplished, she was at

once acclimated to the Lord's choice of her. She was willing in the day of the Lord's power (Psa 110:3). Like Abraham before her, she was *"strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform"* (Rom 4:20-21).

This is what faith does, as confirmed in Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and others whom God notified how He would use them. **The absence of this kind of response is a problem of monumental proportions.** People who are apparently not willing to adopt the Divinely revealed agenda are so numerous within the professed church that it challenges the most prodigious thinker. Whole institutions have been created by men to deal with problems among professing Christians. It all sounds like noble work, and the church-world has even created educational programs to train people in resolving problems found among professing Christians. **Who is able to find a young lady of Mary's caliber among the churches of our time? Or an older woman of Elizabeth's quality?** Yet, these woman are standards for our mothers and daughters.

**How can you account for the role Mary played in this matter apart from God's election?** Who chose this assignment – Mary or God? Gabriel did not tell Mary she could choose to have the Spirit overshadow her in order to the conception of Jesus, but rather announced that this is what would take place.

#### BE IT UNTO ME

*" . . . be it unto me according to thy word."*

Other versions read, *"be it done to*

*me according to your word,"* <sup>NASB</sup> *"May it be done to me as you have said,"* <sup>NIV</sup> *"Let it be with me according to your word,"* <sup>NRSV</sup> *"may it happen to me as you have said,"* <sup>CJB</sup> *"Let everything you've said happen to me,"* <sup>GWN</sup> and *"May everything you have said about me come true."* <sup>NLT</sup>

**Keep in mind that this had never before happened in human history, and it would never happen again.** Four thousand years had passed without a single virgin ever conceiving. There was no precedent; no one with whom to consult; no corroborating word from anyone else. Only a single witness, and a single utterance. **Recall what Gabriel told her.**

- ⇨ She would conceive in her womb.
- ⇨ She would bring forth a son.
- ⇨ She was to name the son *"Jesus."*
- ⇨ The Son would be great.
- ⇨ He would be called *"the Son of the Highest."*
- ⇨ The Lord God would give the Son the throne of His Father, David.
- ⇨ He would reign over the house of Jacob for ever.
- ⇨ Of His kingdom there would be no end.
- ⇨ The Holy Spirit would come upon Mary.
- ⇨ The power of the highest would overshadow her.
- ⇨ That Holy Thing which would be born of her would be called *"the Son of God."*
- ⇨ Elizabeth, who was called barren, was now in the sixth month of her conception.
- ⇨ With God, nothing shall be impossible.

All of this was said one time. Nothing like it had ever been said before. Yet, that volume of revelation,

declared a single time, was believed by Mary, and heartily embraced.

Lest anyone think that this is most unusual, I would remind you that the same sort of thing consistently took place after Jesus' enthronement in heaven.

- ⇨ It took place on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:37-41)
- ⇨ In the city of Samaria (Acts 8:12)
- ⇨ With the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-39)
- ⇨ With Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:3-20)
- ⇨ With the household of Cornelius (Acts 10:1-48)
- ⇨ With the household of Lydia (Acts 16:14-15)
- ⇨ With the Philippian jailer and his household (Acts 16:24-34).

In all of these, there was a single message, a message that was not repeated or confirmed by another witness, and an instant and thorough response – just as with Mary.

How were such things possible? It is because the power of God was present, and the people believed.

It ought to be evident that the kind of responses to the word of God that are rather common in our time betray the absence of both the power of God, and faith in the hearers.

#### THE ANGEL DEPARTED

*" . . . And the angel departed from her."*

Gabriel having fulfilled his mission, and witnessed to the willingness of Mary in the day of God's power, he departed from her, returning to the seat of Divine government for the next assignment.

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 10/3/14. We will continue our series of lessons in the Gospel of Luke. The second lesson will cover verses 24-38 of chapter 1: **"ELIZABETH CONCEIVES, AND THE ANGEL GABRIEL APPEARS TO MARY."** The entrance of the promised Seed draws closer, and God-ordained events begin to take place rapidly. As the time approaches, it will be within the context of two miraculous births, with the later being the greater. The two women who are involved are at opposite ends of the spectrum of age: one young, and one old. When they receive the announcements, one is barren, and one is a virgin. Both women are holy, and respond to what the promised births with praise and honor. Our meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.