

"Son of the Most High God"

Luke 1:26-38

The birth of Jesus Christ was a miraculous, one-of-a-kind birth. In the mythological stories of gods, there are strange birth accounts but usually, they are co-inhabitations of gods with humans or animals with humans. But in Jesus, He humbled Himself to cell form and develop as an embryo in the womb of Mary to be born as a boy, grew up naturally as any human, when ultimately, at the age of 30 began His ministry to reveal that He is the Son of the Most High God. This is a very unique way to refer to Jesus. These words come from Gabriel. Who already appeared to Zechariah announcing that Elizabeth, his barren wife of beyond child-bearing years, would bear the forerunner of the Messiah (John the Baptist). Now He is the messenger again to bring the good news of the Messiah's coming into the world. Six months into Elizabeth's pregnancy Gabriel appears to Mary and tells her she, a virgin, will give birth to the Son of the Most High. And the next three words are 'The Lord God'. Jesus is the son of the Most High, Lord God.

If we could relate this to anything on a human level, we might illustrate it with a fancy dinner at a place full of royalty where each guest is introduced to the crowd with their title, which signifies who they came from and what geographic and political power they hold. The longer the title the more impressed we are supposed to be. Jesus, Son of the Most High, Lord God, son of David.

And impressed we should be at Jesus here because as Son of the Most High God these are some of the implications of what His title means for us.

Jesus Wants to be With Us **(1:26-29)**

Gabriel says to Mary.

Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you. Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. ³⁰ But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God.

Gabriel emphasizes the word 'favour' to make sure Mary knows this is a good greeting and God is pleased with her. Favour is also the same word used for 'grace', meaning undeserved favour. Mary didn't earned God's favour, God chose her by His grace. He chose for Jesus to dwell in her because He wanted to. And even though all of us have sinned, fallen short of God's glory and deserved to be punished for our sins. Yet it pleases God to open our hearts to know Him and to come to be with us. God Most High is perfect and holy and sovereign and just. Yet He choose to open our hearts and eyes to know Him. And chooses to be with us all the time through the Spirit of Jesus.

"The Lord is with you". Gabriel would speak the same words to Joseph later on, assuring him that Jesus, is Emmanuel which means God with us. Think of all the times we've demonstrated we haven't always wanted to be with God. Our sinful actions, our selfish thoughts, the way we've refused or pretended to ignore His will. But He never leaves us nor forsakes us.

God is so trustworthy. He will never fail us or abandon us. He's committed to us so much so that He uses the analogy of marriage both to Israel in the Old Testament and the church in the New

Testament. He's married to us. He's not going to divorce us. Why is He so committed to His people who are imperfect, unholy and too often not willing to serve Him? Because we're part of His plan to help save the world. Gabriel told Mary why God chose her; so that she would bring Jesus to the world who will change the world.

³¹ You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, ³³ and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

The title of Jesus refers to His domain, all that he has power over.

Jesus Wants to Share His Power With Us **(1:32-35)**

God planned to send Jesus into the world first to save the world from sin and then to return and rule the world saving it from the self-destruction of sinful humanity. These words are prophecies right out of the Old Testament, promises made to Israel through whom the Messiah would come. Most High God is a reference to God is the highest – actually the only true God. Of the 50 times this title is found in the Old Testament, it is most often found in Daniel, thirteen times (other than the psalms). That makes sense. In Daniel, Nebuchadnezzar has two visions of his worldly throne and other subsequent worldly thrones. Yet, clearly Daniel shows us that God is sovereign over all these thrones.

After Nebuchadnezzar's second dream comes true – a dream about himself losing self-control and living as an animal for 7 years, even though God in His grace allowed Nebuchadnezzar to keep his earthly throne – when Nebuchadnezzar comes to his senses, this is what he declares about God in Dan. 4:34:

Then I praised the Most High; I honored and glorified him who lives forever. His dominion is an eternal dominion; his kingdom endures from generation to generation.

³⁵ All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back his hand or say to him: "What have you done?"

Nebuchadnezzar had his own gods; but he came to know The true God, the God Most High. 'Most High' means, there are no gods higher than Him. And we know it means He is the only God and He is over all. This is His domain, all creation. And He has chosen His Son to take over all His domain. He even tells us where He will rule from, on David's throne which is Jerusalem. Zech 14:4 tells us Jesus' feet will once again stand on the Mount of Olives and He will rescue Israel from being annihilated by the nations who will be gathered together by the anti-Christ to destroy Israel. And then he will establish his rule on earth, a rule that will extend into eternity.

We know Mary knows these things because we hear her understanding of Gabriel's words in her song in vv.46-55. Part of God's plan involves the Son of God taking on human flesh through a miraculous birth; also prophesied in Is. 7:14. Unlike Zechariah who asked Gabriel for another sign, Mary believes Gabriel's words but she doesn't know how this can happen since she has yet to be with a man. Gabriel responds:

"The Holy Spirit will come on 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.

Mary will miraculously conceive Jesus without the assistance of a man. It was a virgin birth – a miracle of the Spirit. While Mary’s role was to bring Jesus physically into the world, it is our toll to take Jesus’ message to the whole world. How?

By the power of God Most High (Acts 1:8; John 14:15-18)

What Mary experienced physically we experience spiritually. Jesus lives in those of us who have believed His Words; that He is the Son of God who alone can pay the penalty for our sins. Only He can redeem us and make us right with God. That too is a miracle that takes place within us through the Spirit. Now we who have Jesus living in us are God’s plan to get His message to the world so people can be saved through faith. When they do they join God’s plan to continue to bring Jesus to the world so more can be saved, before Jesus physically returns and begins to rule on David’s throne.

It’s fascinating that Jesus repeats Gabriel’s words “The holy Spirit will come upon you” and uses those words as His final sending-off words in Acts 1:8 when He commissions all of us to take the gospel to the world.

⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

In John 14:15-18, Jesus said it similarly,

If you love me, you will obey what I command. ¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever— ¹⁷ the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. ¹⁸ I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.

The Spirit is from God Most High. He is just like Jesus because the word “another” means one just the same as. The Spirit of God Most High is with us always. He now empowers us to go over all of God Most High’s domain (ends of the earth) and spread His message of reconciliation with God. And as Mary’s next words point out, who are we that we have found grace with God to be used for His purpose?

Remember Mary’s response to Gabriel’s words ‘You have found favour with God’? She was greatly troubled, which means confused, and perplexed. If Mary was confused and perplexed about God’s plan to send Jesus into the world through her, similarly we shake our heads as to why God would favour us with that responsibility. We aren’t very special; we’re just ordinary people. Remember what Jesus said to his disciples in John 14:18 about what the Spirit’s presence in us means? *“I will not leave you as orphans”*.

The reason He empowers us by His Spirit is because we have been

Adopted by God Most High (Gal. 4:4-7; Rom. 8)

⁴ But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, ⁵ to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. ⁶ Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, “Abba, Father.” ⁷ So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.

We have been adopted by God Most High. Jesus is the Son of the Most High and now we too are co-heirs as sons and daughters of God Most High. Adoption is a privilege and shouldn't be taken for granted. We'll get everything the Son gets, guaranteed. Later. For now this privilege brings responsibility. We're His and God's representatives on earth, sent to do His mission of telling the world God is the Most High and Jesus is His Son, who willingly died in our place for our sins, so that we who believe in the divine creator and His Son inherit eternal life. We are to show we're His heirs by living by the Spirit's empowering and leading:

¹³ For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, ¹⁴ because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. ¹⁵ For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." ¹⁶ The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. ¹⁷ Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

Sons and daughters of the Most High God may be called to suffer for God's message. Why? Because most of the world doesn't want to trust the Most High God or His Son, they want to live as if they are their own most high god. Like Nebuchadnezzar, they want to relish in and show off to others all who they are and have accomplished. But like Nebuchadnezzar, there is a day of humbling coming. So we, in the power of the Spirit and in the security of our eternal heritage can do this by faith and say as Mary did,

³⁸ "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said."

Jesus Can Work Through Willing Servants **(1:36-38)**

Who was Mary? A teenager from a little place called Nazareth in Galilee. Galilee had a lousy reputation. It was the 'other side of the tracks'. It was the north of 7 of Israel. Every city and country has those parts where the reputation is less than stellar; usually for no reason, just rumour. Gabriel assures Mary of the validity of God's words by telling her Elizabeth her older cousin who was barren was already in the 6th month of her pregnancy! God plans to change the world through the message of the gospel by saving ordinary people who live in ordinary towns – like Newboro, Crosby, Elgin, Portland – and change the world one soul at a time. That's His plan. You and I are part of His plan. It's been working pretty well for 2000 years since Jesus left and He hasn't changed it yet. Are you believing God with your life that He can bring Jesus to others through you?

Mary did. Gabriel finished his statement with this:

³⁷ For no word from God will ever fail."

Some of our translations say, 'Nothing is impossible with God' but the sentence literally reads 'every word will not be impossible for God.' In the Greek New Testament, there are two words for 'word'. The familiar one is *logos* which is used for Jesus as the living Word of God but also a reference to the word of God. The other word for 'word' is *rhema* which means a specific, even single word from God. Every single word from God will be fulfilled. And Mary said

Mary believed every word from God would be fulfilled. That's why she could submit to God's will for her life by allowing Jesus to live in her so she could bring Him into the world. So what about you and I? Do we trust God for His will for our life in using us to bring Jesus to our world?

Jesus came exactly according to every one of God's words that prophesied His first coming. Jesus will come exactly according to every one of God's words that have been prophesied about His second coming. Mary believed the Messiah was coming. She even accepted that she was part of God's plan to bring Jesus to the world. This is what confidence in the Word of God does for us; that the Spirit dwells in us to empower us and that we are secure in God because we are adopted. This strengthens our faith in the Most High God who wants to use ordinary people like us to bring Jesus to the people we know and interact with, and the places in our world where we live and have the opportunity to reach.

Does that mean doing God's will is always easy? No. It wasn't for Mary. To accept being pregnant before marriage meant Mary would face ridicule, suspicion, and rejection. People would not believe her. Joseph didn't initially believe her as we saw last week. Following God's will meant rejection of family and community – for Mary and can be for us as well. Accepting God's will means doing what God wants for you not what you want for you. When we accept what God wants to do through us it results in our joy. *'Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed [happy] is the one who makes God His refuge.'* (Ps. 34:8)

God is the Most High God and His Son is the rightful ruler of the world. We, His servants are His adopted sons and daughters. We are secure in Him. Nothing or no one can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus. We must not be afraid but must share the message of hope and joy in Jesus so others can be adopted and serve the God Most High.

Let's say out loud Mary's words of obedience of commitment to being used by Jesus for the Most High God:

'I am the Lord's servant.'

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If you have any comments or questions about this message please contact us at olivet@rideau.net