

# KNOWING GOD ... better

## THE CHRIST OF CHRISTMAS

Text: Luke 1:26-33

INTRODUCTION: Last week I confessed to you how much I love Christmas, and it is my contention that we cannot celebrate it too extensively. No matter what we do, we cannot

- Hang too many lights
- Sing too many carols
- Set out too many decorations
- Have too many parties

The event that we celebrate is so monumental that if we poured all of our money and all of our effort, even all of our heart into the celebration of this event, the celebration would fall short of the reality of what is being celebrated.

But this morning I want our focus to be not on the Christmas event, the birth in the manger, but instead upon

- the Child who was born
- the Son who was given
- the Savior who was announced by the angels
- the Christ of Christmas

I want us to think about the Person of the Christ of Christmas.

We will go back to our same text as last week, because we are far from exhausting it.

Luke 1:26–33 NKJV

26 Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, 27 to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary.

28 And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!" 29 But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was.

30 Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. 32 He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. 33 And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."

Let me quickly summarize what we saw last week, which will not only help those not present, but it will help all of us jump back into the context so we can fine tune our attention upon the Christ of Christmas.

After more than 400 years of silence,

- God sent the angel Gabriel to tell aged Zacharias and his wife Elizabeth that He would give them a son in their old age who would prepare the way for the coming of Messiah, the Christ.
- Six months into Elizabeth's pregnancy, Gabriel was dispatched again to bring God's message to the niece of Elizabeth, a virgin, probably around 13 years old, whose name was Mary.
- Mary had been betrothed by her parents in an arranged marriage to a young man probably 14 or 15 years old whose name was Joseph.
- Mary was in that period of time between the legally binding betrothal and the wedding feast, which time would prove her purity and chastity.
- Immediately following the wedding feast, the marriage would be consummated. Until then, Mary would remain a virgin.
- To this young woman the angel Gabriel announced, "Mary, God is with you, and He is giving you abundant grace, so much so that you will be called the most blessed woman in the world."
- Mary was stunned and troubled by this announcement, because she knew herself to be unworthy. She knew herself to be a sinner.
- Mary was correct. She was not worthy for what God was about to do through her life, but no one was worthy. That was why she was given so much grace.
- Then Gabriel gave Mary the clincher. He said, "God has given you such grace as to do a miracle inside of you. Though you are a virgin, you will conceive and bear a Son."

So now, I want us to come back to verse 31.

**Luke 1:31 NKJV** And behold, **you** will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and **shall call His name JESUS.**

**Jesus, Yeshua in the Hebrew, means YHWH is salvation or YHWH saves.**

**This is a statement of the purpose of the Messiah.**

- The angel explained the meaning of the name Jesus to Joseph.

**Matthew 1:21 NKJV And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."**

- The angel also told this to the shepherds.

**Luke 2:11 NKJV For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.**

- God had promised faithful old Simeon that before he died, he would see the Messiah. When he held the baby Jesus in his arms, he praised God and said,

**Luke 2:30 NKJV For my eyes have seen Your salvation**

- Jesus Himself declared,

**Luke 19:10 NKJV ...the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."**

- And the apostle Paul wrote to Timothy

**1 Timothy 1:15 NKJV This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.**

**The name Jesus implies His substitutionary death: that Jesus died in our place.**

One of the most important truths taught throughout the Old Testament era was the necessity of a substitutionary blood sacrifice to bring forgiveness and salvation.

- When Adam and Eve sinned, God killed an animal and shed its blood to provide skins for His disobedient people.
- When God saved Isaac from being offered as a sacrifice to the Lord, God provided a ram whose blood could be shed as a substitute for Abraham's son.
- When God delivered the children of Israel from slavery in Egypt, He told each family to slay a lamb and smear its blood upon the doorpost.
- When God gave the law to Moses, He established a Day of Atonement in which the High Priest would annually slay a bull and a goat and sprinkle their blood upon the Mercy Seat to make atonement for his sins and the sins of the people.

- Repeatedly God taught them, “Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sin.”
- Paul pointed out that the Day of Atonement was an advance picture of what Jesus would do after the resurrection when He would carry His own blood shed upon the cross to heaven and offer it to the Father to make propitiation for the sins of all who trust in Him.

Hebrews 9:12 NKJV Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.

Now to verse 32.

Luke 1:32 NKJV **He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest;**

**Saying “He will be great,” is the epitome of understatement.**

The problem here is not one of translation. The Greek work means great, but the problem is that we use “great” for everything.

- “That was a great hamburger.”
- “That is a great dress you have on.”
- “Wasn’t that a great football game.”

So using the same word to describe Jesus just does not capture the idea. John’s description of Christ in the first chapter of his gospel helps us see more clearly what Gabriel was talking about. John said,

John 1:14 NKJV And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and **we beheld His glory**, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

Glory is the revealed presence of God. **John said, “When we were with Jesus it was like being with God.”**

- He spoke as God speaks.
- He thought as God thinks.
- He acted with the goodness, kindness, and mercy of God Himself.
- He had all power, all knowledge, all wisdom, just like God.

Indeed, He was great! Great beyond what can be captured in words. And ...

Luke 1:32 NKJV **He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest;**

### **Gabriel is saying that the Son Mary will deliver is the Son of God Most High.**

This is the New Testament equivalent of one of the exalted names of God used so often in the Old Testament, and one we studied earlier – El Elyon.

- It means the God at the top.
- The Supreme Ruler of the Universe
- The Most Sovereign God

Now the rest of verse 32, and 33 goes with it.

**Luke 1:32-33 NKJV 32 He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. 33 And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."**

Gabriel is giving Mary the whole scoop. He has told her

- The essence of who her Son will be – the Son of the Most High God
- What He shall be like in His life – great! Great beyond words! Magnificent beyond comparison! Just like His Father!
- Why God the Father is sending His Son into the world – to save sinners by becoming a sacrifice to shed His blood and die in their place. Then...

### **Gabriel announces the end game of God's eternal purpose.**

#### **His Son, Jesus, shall reign from David's throne forever!**

I confess to you that this is my favorite part.

After King David defeated the Philistines and brought the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem, God told Nathan the prophet to say to David,

**2 Samuel 7:16 NKJV And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever." ' "**

Folks, let me tell you if you do not know, God keeps His promises!

God said David's house will be established forever. That means David's descendants will be established forever.

Jesus Christ was doubly descended from King David.

- He was physically descended from David through Mary, His mother, of the lineage of David.

- He was legally descended from David through Joseph, His earthly father, who adopted Jesus as his own son.
- Therefore, Jesus had both the right and authority to be the King of Israel.

Along with that, you remember Isaiah said in his prophetic birth announcement

**Isaiah 9:6 NKJV** For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder.

But during Jesus' first coming, the government was not upon His shoulder. He told Pilate that His kingdom was not of this world.

But Jesus Himself told of a day when the government would be upon His shoulder and of a day He would sit upon David's throne. Jesus said,

**Matthew 25:31 NKJV** "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory.

And then will be fulfilled the rest of what Isaiah wrote in his birth announcement of the Messiah, the Christ.

**Isaiah 9:7 NKJV** Of the increase of *His* government and peace *There will be no end*, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

My friend, Jesus is coming again!

He will come in great power and glory and He will establish His Kingdom upon this earth, first for a thousand years, during which the primeval beauty and majesty of this world the way that God created it will return.

Then the Father will remake both the Heavens and the Earth and the New Jerusalem shall descend from heaven upon the earth and the King of Kings and Lord of Lords shall reign over all the universe forever and forever!

And that is what Gabriel was telling Mary. Of His kingdom, there will be no end!

**And all of that, spoken in so few words, is what constitutes the meaning and the message of Christmas.**

- **The Babe born in the manger is the Son of the Most High God.**
- **He was and He is great! Great beyond words! Magnificent beyond comparison! Just like His Father!**

- **And God the Father sent His Son Jesus into the world to die upon a cross, shedding His blood, to pay the penalty for sin and offer to each sinner His salvation by grace through faith in Him.**
- **And those who trust Him will live with Him forever in His glorious Kingdom that will never end.**

Hallelujah! What a Savior!