

Fix Your Eyes on Jesus' Identity: "He will be called holy."

Focus Passage: Luke 1:26–38

Other Passages Referenced: John 4:34; 6:38; 8:26, 28, 48; Hebrews 4; 1 Peter 2; 2 Corinthians 5; 1 John 3; Isaiah 53; Psalm 45:7

Sermon Recap

The passage describes a birth announcement and gender-reveal party. The one to be born will be a son who is to be named Jesus (YHWH saves). His birth will be unprecedented. His greatness will be unsurpassed. He will be called "holy" and "the Son of God." There were miraculous births in the Old Testament—Sarah, Hannah, etc.—and the birth of John the Baptist in the New Testament; children were born to women who had been unable to conceive and were beyond their childbearing years. But never before was there a birth like Jesus' birth to Mary, a virgin.

The birth announcement came to Mary via the Angel Gabriel, who had also announced the miraculous birth of John the Baptist to Elizabeth, who had been barren. The conception of Jesus to the virgin Mary happened when God the Holy Spirit, "hovered over" Mary. This language is reminiscent of the original creation narrative, where the Spirit of God hovered over the waters before the miracle of creation was spoken by God into existence.

When Mary asks, "How can this be?" she was not doubting, but simply trying to wrap her mind around how what she was hearing could come about. In spite of not having all of the answers, Mary believed and said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word" (Luke 1:38). Are we able to receive God's word as Mary did, to believe that God is speaking to us with a specific word or command?

"He will be called the son of the Most High." In Luke 6:35, Jesus said His disciples could also become sons of the Most High. Two chapters later in Luke 8, a demon refers to Jesus as "The Son of the Most High God." Jesus rules over the universe right now. Jesus had unsurpassed greatness. of John the Baptist was to be great also (Luke 1:15). Jesus said, "among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist" (Matt 11:11). As great as John the Baptist was, Jesus was greater still.

Assuming the throne His father David (Luke 1:32) meant Jesus would be the Messiah King, a king of unsurpassed greatness whose kingdom would never end. That Jesus would be holy meant He shared one of God the Father's most prominent attributes. Jesus was the holy Righteous One, set apart for God's use and He was without sin. Six different writers in the Bible describe the coming Messiah as holy and without sin (Heb 4; 1 Pet 2. 2 Cor 5; 1 John 3; Isa 53; psalm 45:7). Jesus declared that He came to do the will of the Father (John 6:38; 8:26, 28).

Although Jesus was without sin, He identifies with all that is human—life, pain, sorrow, struggle. C. S. Lewis writes, "Once in our world a stable had something in it that was bigger than our whole world." Will you bow before Jesus and the Lordship of Christ?

Interpretive Helps

- To understand the context and continuity of Luke 1:26–38, it will help to read Luke 1:5–25, the birth announcement of John the Baptist.

- The “house of Jacob” was often used to describe the people of Israel (Exod 19:3; Isa 2:5–6; 8:17; 48:1).

Group Gathering

Group Check-in — Care, Celebration, Encouragement (About 1/3 of meeting time)

1. Informal conversation to allow individuals to catch up with one another.
2. Discuss how it went as everyone tried to take steps of obedience to what they sensed God saying to them.

Allow the Word to Speak — Be Hearers of the Word (About 1/3 of meeting time)

READ Matthew 1:18–25

1. What from the passage or sermon was most impactful to you?
2. Were you left with any questions or confusion about the passage or sermon?
3. What is significant about Joseph being “of the house of David” in Luke 1:26? Reading 2 Sam 7:12–16; and Isa 9:6–7; 11:1–2; Jer 23:5–6 will be helpful.
4. In Luke 1:32, what five descriptive declarations does Luke make about Jesus?
5. How does the birth of Jesus compare with the birth of John the Baptist in Luke 1:34–36
6. How do you see the three persons of the Trinity involved in Luke 1:35?

Put the Word into Practice — Be Doers of the Word (About 1/3 of meeting time)

1. Can you point to a time when God’s word called you to trust Him to do something that you found confusing, perhaps a time when you could not understand how He would bring about what He said He would do? How did you respond?
2. The birth of Jesus to the virgin Mary illustrated the angel Gabriel’s claim, “For nothing will be impossible with God” (Luke 1:37). Are you facing what seems an impossible task? Will you join Mary in responding, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word”

The Big Question: What do you sense God's Spirit saying to you and what concrete action will you take in response? Share your answer with the group or another trusted Christian and ask them to pray for you.

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES:

- The Chapel will host the Community of Faith Mission’s homeless shelter from January 10 – 17. You may find more information and a sign-up [here](#).

Further Resources – Illustrations and quotes from the sermon can be found on the “Sermon Slides” link at the bottom of www.wcchapel.org

Recommended Book: *Christian Beliefs: 20 Basics Every Christian Should Know* by Wayne Grudem
<https://www.amazon.com/Christian-Beliefs-Twenty-Basics-Should/dp/0310255996>