



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond V22 N47 December 6, 2020

WONDER

“The Wonder of Mary”

Luke 1:26-38

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

Jesus Christ

I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners, and rose from the dead.

“The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.”

Hebrews 1:3



What is Jesus’
destiny?

In 1965 the epic film *The Greatest Story Ever Told* was released; it told the story of Jesus. Its notable cast included among others Max von Sydow as Jesus, Dorothy McGuire as the Virgin Mary, Charlton Heston as John the Baptist, Claude Rains as Herod the Great, Telly Savalas as Pontus Pilate, Martin Landau as Caiaphas, and David McCallum as Judas Iscariot – perhaps the greatest cast ever assembled. The story is complete in itself, but it amounts to merely one chapter in the even greater *Story of Redemption*. Literary critics label this story a *metanarrative*, because it’s the story that accounts for all other stories, the story into which all of our individual stories fit, defined critically as *the overarching story that gives context, meaning, and purpose to all of life*. The story of Jesus is at the apex of the story of redemption.

All stories, including the story of redemption, are built around seven key elements. *First*, stories begin with an opening *exposition* that describes the setting of the story and introduces the major characters. The story of redemption opens with a description of the creation of the earth as we know it along with all its living things, including human beings (Ge 1, 2), whom God places in a garden east of Eden.

In the following scene, we meet its major characters *individually* (i.e., the woman, Satan clothed as a serpent, the woman’s husband, and the LORD God). It contains the event that triggers the action of the story. Without the fall there is no story to tell, because apart from humanity’s plunge into sin and death redemption is unnecessary. This *second* element of stories is called the *inciting incident*.

“The plot thickens” in the third element of stories called *rising action*. This element describes the complicating twists and turns the plot takes as it moves toward a climax. These twists and turns are narrated in the pages of the Old Testament, leading up to the story of Jesus in the New. The Old Testament tells of key *characters* like Abraham, Moses, and David, as well as other kings and prophets, whose stories are likewise integral to the unfolding plot. It also describes key *historical events* like the preservation of Jacob and his sons in Egypt, the exodus, the conquest of the Promised Land, the choice of Israel’s first king, Saul, the exile of the kingdoms of Israel and

Judah, followed by Judah’s return, and the rebuilding of the temple. It records the terms of key *covenants* like the one God made with humanity in Eden to provide a redeemer (Ge 3:15), the one God made with Abraham, to bless all peoples on earth (Ge 12:1-3), the one God made with David, promising to establish his dynasty’s right to rule forever (2Sa 7:11b-16; Ps 89; cf., Lk 1:32-33), and the one God will make with Israel and Judah, promising to forgive their sins and write his law on their hearts (Jer 31:31-34). It contains key *prophecies* regarding the coming Messiah and Redeemer like Isaiah 7:14 and 9:6-7, Isaiah 42:1-9 and 52:13-53:12, as well as Micah 5:2, all building toward the climax of the story.

The *fourth* element of stories is called the *climax*. It determines the outcome of the story and is its most exciting part. The climax doesn’t mark the end of the story, but it reveals how the story will end. The story of Jesus is the climax of the story of redemption. It includes the announcement of his birth to Mary (Lk 1:26-38) and to Joseph (Mt 1:18-25), the nativity stories (Lk 1:39-2:40; Mt 2:1-23), the testimony of John (Mt 3:1-12; Mk 1:3-8; Lk 3:2-17), the accounts of Jesus’ baptism (Mt 3:13-17; Mk 1:9-11; Lk 3:31,22; Jn 1:31-34) and testing in the wilderness (Mt 4:1-11; Mk 1:12, 13; Lk 4:1-13), the record of his three-year-plus public ministry and concluding passion – which, by the way, marked the fulfillment of the promise God made to humanity in the beginning.

The *fifth* element of stories is called *falling action*, which describes events resulting from the climax as the plot moves toward its conclusion – namely, the spread of the gospel from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth.

The *sixth* element of stories is the *resolution*. The resolution solves once and for all the problem created by the inciting incident marking the beginning of the end of the story. The return of Christ to rule is the resolution of the story of redemption.

The *seventh* element of stories has a French label; it’s called the *denouement*. It marks the end of the story by showing how the major characters are better off than at the beginning. In the end, the messianic kingdom is handed over to the Father (1Co 15:23; Rev 21-22) and the story of redemption that begins on earth ends on earth, a new earth.

1

EXAMINE GOD'S WORD

26 In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, 27 to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. 28 The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

29 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. 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."

34 "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

35 The angel answered, "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. 36 Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. 37 For no word from God will ever fail."

38 "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Circle "virgin" in vv. 27, 34.
- Bracket "pledged to be married" in v. 27.
- Underline Mary's initial response to Gabriel in v. 29.
- Box "but" indicating *contrast* in v. 30.
- Highlight the description of Jesus in vv. 32, 33.
- Double underline "Son of the Most High" in v. 32 and "Son of God" in v. 35.
- Box "so" indicating *result* in v. 35.
- Box "for" indicating *reason* in v. 37.
- Highlight Mary's final response to Gabriel in v. 38.

What one word would you use to describe the TONE of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What one thing you do not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the THEME of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about _____."



DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. The term “virgin” is used three times in the Annunciation to Mary. Explain why Mary’s virginity is worth repeating (cf., Mt 1:22-23; Ge 3:15).
2. If Joseph wasn’t Jesus’ *biological* father, why do you suppose Luke bothered to tell us that Joseph was a descendant of David?
3. Gabriel greeted Mary warmly. Why would she be troubled?
4. Mary “found favor” with God. How so?
5. What do you infer from comparing Lk 1:32-33 with 2Sa 7:5-16?
6. Mary questioned Gabriel. Do you think she doubted what he told her? Explain.
7. Put what verse 35 means in your own words.
8. Why do you think Gabriel told Mary about Elizabeth?
9. How does Mary’s response to Gabriel’s announcement strike you?
10. **Discussion:** Talk about what can be learned from Mary’s response in verse 35 to Gabriel’s announcement.

Commentary On The Text

Christmas is a wondrous time, not because the decorations, gifts, and time spent with family are wonderful, but because the birth of Jesus is. The trappings and traditions of the holiday are emptied of their meaning apart from him. Luke 1:26-38 contains the Annunciation to Mary. Various aspects of Luke's Christology appear in this passage: Jesus is the Son of God (vv. 32, 35), he is also the Davidic Messiah (vv. 32-33) and King whose reign is eternal (v. 33), and he is the Holy One (v. 35). The angel Gabriel appears to Mary in Nazareth, a little town in Galilee with a population of 400-500, so insignificant that later some doubted that Jesus could be the Christ, because he came from there (Jn 7:41). Of course, while the announcement of Jesus' birth is made in Nazareth, Jesus is born in Bethlehem as foretold by prophet: "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times" (Mic 5:2).

When Gabriel appears to Mary following his appearance to Zechariah, he tells her that she has been chosen to be the mother of Jesus, who would be great and called the Son of the Most High. Luke makes it perfectly clear that she is unmarried at the time — "a virgin pledged to be married to a man" — no doubt, because of the prophecy in Isaiah 7:14, which Matthew links directly to Mary's pregnancy. He writes: "All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: 'The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel (which means 'God with us')'" (1:22-23). The Gospel of John provides a more theological take on the incarnation. John writes: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" and "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth" (1:1, 14).

Mary's response is one of humility mingled with fear; she sees no reason to receive a visit from an angel or to receive special favors from heaven and rightly so. As one commentator explains, "She is honored by God not because of her own merit or because she has done anything but simply because she is the chosen vessel for this demonstration of God's grace" (Darrell L. Bock, *The NIV Application Commentary: Luke*, 58). Luke is careful to mention in passing that Mary's fiancé, Joseph, is a descendant of David, which is important "for that ancestry qualifies Jesus for his messianic role and makes what Gabriel says in vv. 32-33 possible" (Craig A. Evans, *Luke*, NIBC, 25).

The angel puts her mind at ease, telling her that her son will be given the throne of his father David and will reign over the house of Jacob forever, indicating that the

kingdom of God over which he will rule will never end. You see, God made a promise to David (2Sa 7:1-17). King David wanted to build a house for the LORD, but the LORD turned the tables on him and promised to "establish a house for him" instead. David had a temple in mind; God had King David's dynasty in mind. Jesus came to earth to be the Savior of the world, but he also came to fulfill the promises God made to his Jewish forefathers. Today, Jesus is enthroned in heaven (Ac 2:32-33), but one day he will return to earth to be enthroned on earth (Rev 20:1-4).

When Mary asks, "How will this be?" unlike Zachariah who doubted Gabriel (Lk 1:18), she isn't doubting the angel's words. She is expressing her wonder given the fact that she is a virgin. Gabriel answers her question by revealing that *it will be* because the Holy Spirit *will make it so*. The son she will bear will not be fathered by Joseph — albeit Jesus is adopted by him (Mt 1:18-25). The son she will bear will be God's unique *incarnate* Son. Gabriel's words to her, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you," words reminiscent of Genesis 1:2. "So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God," suggest that The Holy Spirit will create the biological material necessary for conception, and in the creation of that material deity will be united with humanity. And just to show that nothing is impossible with God, Gabriel adds that in her old age Mary's relative, Elizabeth, is going to have her first child. The virgin's remarkable piety is evident in her closing response, "I am the Lord's servant. May it be to me as you have said." One commentator writes: "This was no simple matter. She is being asked to bear a child as a virgin without being married. In standing up for God and his power, she will probably become the object of much doubt and ridicule. But Mary knows she is God's servant, so she will allow God to work through her as he wills. He can place her in whatever difficult circumstances he desires, for she knows that God is with her" (Bock, 58).

This narrative like all biblical narratives is two stories in one. The *upper* story of this narrative is about Jesus. It reveals that he is the virgin born Son of the Most High to whom God has given the throne of his ancestor, David. The *upper* story is about Mary. It reveals her exemplary piety and submission to the will of God summarized in her closing words to the angel: "I am the Lord's servant. May your word to me be fulfilled" (v. 38).

Word Studies/Notes

v. 26 *sixth month* Not of the year but of Elizabeth's pregnancy (cf. v. 36).

v. 26 *Nazareth* "The announcement in Nazareth shows that Mary came from humble agrarian roots. Galilee was not a respected region. It was hardly the expected locale for one sent from God (John 7:41)" (Darrell L. Bock, *The NIV Application Commentary: Luke*, 57).

v. 26 *virgin* "If one is open to the possibility of God entering into history and being able to transcend the 'laws of nature,' it is not difficult to believe that the God who raised his Son from the dead and empowered him to do many mighty miracles could have sent him into the world by the miracle of the virgin birth" (Robert H. Stein, *Luke*, NAC, 82).

v. 27 *pledged* A Jewish betrothal involved a formal engagement including a contract and exchange of a bridal price, then about a year later, a wedding. "Engagement involved a formal agreement initiated by a father seeking a wife for his son. The next most important person involved was the father of the bride. A son's opinion would be sought more often in the process than a daughter's. Upon payment of a purchase price to the bride's father (for he lost a daughter and helper whereas the son's family gained one) and a written agreement and/or oath by the son, the couple was engaged. Although during this stage the couple in some instances cohabited, this was the exception. An engagement was legally binding, and any sexual contact by the daughter with another person was considered adultery. The engagement could not be broken save through divorce (Matt 1:19), and the parties during this period were considered husband and wife (Matt 1:19-20, 24). At this time Mary likely was no more than fifteen years old, probably closer to thirteen, which was the normal age for betrothal" (Stein, 82).

v. 27 *descendant of David* Anticipates what the angel would tell Mary in verses 32, 33. "It is significant that Joseph is a descendant of David (v. 27), for that ancestry qualifies Jesus for his messianic role and makes what Gabriel says in vv. 32-33 possible" (Craig A. Evans, *Luke*, NIBC, 25).

v. 28 *favored* While it is true that Mary was a pious virgin, the favor she received was an indication of God's grace rather than her piety. "The text suggests no special worthiness on Mary's part" (Stein, 83).

v. 32 *Most High* A circumlocution for God; see verse 35.

v. 32 *throne* God promised David, "Your throne will be established forever" (2Sa 7:16; cf. 11b), i.e., that the right to rule over Israel would never be taken away from David's descendants. In accord with that promise, the angel told Mary that Jesus would be king and would reign over Israel forever. What's more, his kingdom would never end (see Isa 9:6; cf. Dan 7:14).

v. 34 *How will* Mary doesn't doubt what Gabriel told her. She asks not "how *can* it be true?" but "how *will* it be true?"

v. 35 *the holy one* "Therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God" (NRSV; cf. NIV margin). As a result of the Spirit's miraculous work Jesus will be known as holy and Son of God.

v. 36 *Elizabeth* "Mary was informed that her Son would have no human father, and that He should be indeed the Son of God who would fulfill the promises given to David of a Son to reign over His house forever. In confirmation of this unusual promise and evidence of the supernatural power of God, Mary was informed that her kinswoman Elizabeth had also conceived a son in her old age as a demonstration of the power of God" (John F. Walvoord, *Jesus Christ Our Lord*, 99).

4

APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

The virgin Mary consented to bear a son, Jesus our Savior, the Son of Most High God, destined to rule over the house of Jacob forever.

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The “Living Questions” are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?



FAMILY TALK

How do you think Mary broke the news of her pending pregnancy to her parents? Do you think she be-bopped downstairs the next morning and announced, "So, an angel appeared last night and said I would become pregnant with Jesus, as in, the Messiah. Crazy, huh?! He said it would happen with the help of the Holy Spirit and not to be afraid. Can I go to Elizabeth's house? She's pregnant, too!" What do you think her parents' reaction was? Were they angry? Scared? Concerned? Maybe they thought Mary was a little off her rocker and chalked it up to some crazy tale. I really want Mary to have awesome parents, the kind of parents you look up to. I want to think when she broke the news their faces were wiped of shock. I'd really like to think they took the news with grace and compassion and love for their young daughter. I want to imagine they believed her story and were excited about what was to come. How do you react when your kids drop unexpected and/or unwanted news in your laps? We can all be tempted to fly off the handle when we get upset with our kids especially, when they get in trouble or don't live up to our expectations. Instead, consider leading with Christ's love. Live out His grace and compassion in the way you react. Show your child His mercy with a hug and abounding forgiveness. Above all, love unconditionally, the way He loves you. We are praying your kids feel the overflow of Christ's love from you.

What Does The Bible Say?

Read Luke 1:26-38.

1. What was Mary's first reaction to the angel, Gabriel?
2. What do you learn about Jesus in this passage? What do you learn about God?
3. What was Mary's final attitude to the news Gabriel brought?

What Do You Think?

Put yourself in Mary's shoes. Describe how she might have felt knowing she was going to be the mother of the Savior of the world.

What Do You Do?

Using items around the house, be creative and make an angel. Share the story of the angel visiting Mary with your family.

CORE COMPETENCY: Jesus Christ

I believe Jesus Christ is fully God/fully man and died for my sins.

MEMORY VERSE: Isaiah 9:6

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

KidPIX COUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRALKids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

- _____ I completed my Bible Study
- _____ I memorized this week's verse
- _____ I brought my Bible to church
- _____ I brought a friend



CHILD'S NAME

GRADE PARENT SIGNATURE

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)

I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)

I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)

I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)

I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)

I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)

I choose to esteem others above myself.



CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)

I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)

I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)

I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)

I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)

I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

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The Scrolls Bible Study is a spiritual growth resource of Central Bible Church, Fort Worth, Texas.

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