

The Annunciation

Luke 1:26-38

INTRODUCTION: We really love Christmas in the Terry household. As a matter of fact every single morning our youngest daughter has chosen to be awakened by the song, “Last Christmas” by Mariah Carey... and since her volume is set to 10, the rest of us wake up to it as well, whether we want to or not.

So I am very comfortable speaking from a text that is typically reserved for Christmas here in spring of the year. In fact, I believe there are some advantages to looking at the Christmas story now.

You see the sentimental affection we have for Christmas can obscure the doctrinal propositions of the text itself. So let’s look at the story today, without snow flakes, without the smell of gingerbread, no sugarplums, let read the story and see what God has for us.

CONTEXT: Last week we saw the announcement of a very special birth the Zachariah and Elizabeth. If you remember, Elizabeth hid herself for 5 months until she began to show that she was obviously pregnant. Verse 26 picks up in the 6th month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy...

TEXT: Luke 1:26–27 (ESV)

²⁶ In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth.

Now Gabriel is sent from God to Galilee to a city named Nazareth.

Now in the OT you will not find the region of Galilee. This region became called by the name Galilee during the intertestamental period. The word Galilee means “circuit”. The region had about 20 cities that had been given by Solomon to Hiram the King of Tyre, who provided Cedar for the building of the Temple. During the Intertestamental time the name Galilee referred to the northern third of Israel - you had Galilee, Samaria, then Judea.



Galilee itself was divided into two portions - Upper Galilee and Lower Galilee. Upper Galilee was called, “Galilee of the Gentiles”. This was the most irreligious and despised region of Israel outside of the Samaritan people.

It was too far to the north to regularly visit the Temple in Jerusalem. The Romans had a garrison stationed there. The local Jewish population had to trade with the Gentiles in order to survive.

In Isaiah 9, the Prophet had foretold that this is region would be home to the Messiah. **Isaiah 9:1–2 (ESV)** 1 ...the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali... the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. 2 The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light...

So keep in mind this was a dark region, a despised region. No great men had come from Nazareth. There was a proverb at the time, *“Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?”*. I think of it like Auburn University...:)

Interesting thing about the God we serve. He prefers the mundane, the ordinary, the unimpressive. He stores His treasure in regular old every day clay pots.

>>Maybe today there are some of you that have the best of education, you know the right people, you have the perfect pedigree... you are like the **finest of china**. I hate to break it to you, but God tends to prefer **Tupperware**.

- He serves the perfect cut of Wagyu Steak on paper plates.
- And the finest of wine in Red Solo Cups.

Paul said it this way - **1 Corinthians 1:26–29 (ESV)** 26 For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. 27 But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; 28 God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, 29 so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.

As the Son of God was nailed to the cross at the very top it would say, “Jesus the Nazarene”. *In this city of Nazareth live a young lady named Mary...*

27 to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David.

Betrothal was a legally binding promise of marriage. The marriage of Mary and Joseph had likely been arranged by their parents. Mary was likely around the age of 14 when this occurred, Joseph a few years older. During this period they would live separately and have not physical intimacy. Joseph would focus on building a home for this new family unit. Remember what Jesus said, “Behold, I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go I will come again and receive you unto myself that where I am you may be also”? This was part of

the betrothal ceremony - the groom goes and prepares a place, then the wedding occurs when he comes to receive her unto himself.

27b. And the virgin's name was Mary.

That young lady, in this backwoods village has become one of the most beloved and controversial figures in church history. More baby girls are given the name Mary than any other name. Here we are told that she was a virgin.

The virgin birth has been a stumbling block for people since the earliest days of the Church.

WHY THE CONTROVERSY? Well it stems from the OT passage that Matthew quoted when telling of the virgin birth.

In Isaiah 7 – *The Lord sends Isaiah the Prophet to King Ahaz who was trembling in fear about the armies that were encamped against Jerusalem. God said, “Tell him not to fear, their plans will not succeed”. Then God does something very unusual,*

Isaiah 7:11–14 (ESV)

¹¹ “Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.” ¹² But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test.” ¹³ And he said, “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? ¹⁴ Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. **Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.**

Now the Hebrew word for virgin in this passage is the word **ALMA**, which can mean virgin as you and I know the word, or it can mean young woman. There was a Hebrew word that is more specific word for virgin, **BATULLA**.

Why would Isaiah have chosen to use a word open to such broad interpretation? Simply because Isaiah was giving what theologians call a **DUEL Prophecy**. There would be an immediate fulfillment of the prophecy then there would be an ultimate, future fulfillment of the same prophecy.

- **Immediate fulfillment Isaiah 8:3–4 (ESV)** when Isaiah’s wife gave birth to a son by normal means. His wife was an ALMA, a young woman.
- **Ultimate Fulfillment** - But then we see this same prophecy referenced in **Matthew 1** as the Ultimate Fulfillment of **Isa. 7:14**. ²³“BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL,” which translated means, “GOD WITH US.”

Now when the Old Testament Passage is translated, no longer does the biblical writer use an obscure word for virgin. This time the writer uses the

word **Parthenos**. A word that very clearly means virgin or one who has had no physical relations with a man.

We can also see that even prior to the birth of Jesus, the Jewish community anticipated a supernatural, virgin birth in the coming of Messiah. How do we know that? Back to the first sermon on the **intertestamental period** - remember we discussed the translation of the OT into Greek called the Septuagint? That translation occurred long after Isaiah's prophecy, and long before Jesus was born. Guess which word they used for virgin when they translated Isaiah 8? **Parthenos**.

So is it true that Mary was a virgin when she conceived Jesus? Yes! We will see in a moment why that is fundamentally important.

Luke 1:28-33 (ESV)

²⁸ And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!"

²⁹ But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be.

Like Zachariah before her, Mary was not accustomed to an Angelic visit. She was greatly troubled.

³⁰ And 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 bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to 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."

³⁴ Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?"

Isn't it interesting that the first person to struggle with the virgin birth was the virgin herself?

Virgin Births are not the norm. As a matter of fact I would say that if you are an adult and you haven't struggled with the concept of the virgin birth at all - you probably aren't thinking about it deeply.

Paul even said it was mysterious in **I Tim. 3:16** *without controversy great is the mystery of Godliness; God was manifest in the flesh.*

The only explanation we are given as to how it occurred is in Luke 1:35 (ESV) ³⁵ And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God.

Simple as that - the words are similar to the description of the Glory of God filling the Temple in the OT.

So far we have seen a supernatural conception with Zachariah and Elizabeth, but it was through ordinary means. John had the DNA of Zachariah and Elizabeth.

This one would be different - Only Mary would contribute DNA, not Joseph. The remainder would be contributed by God Himself.

Why is that Essential?

1. Israel's King could not be a Descendant of Jeconiah

God had promised that the seed of David would be given an eternal throne in Israel. Well the last of David's line to rule was a man named Jeconiah.

Jeconiah a descendant of David was King for 3 months and 10 days. He was King when Babylon conquered Jerusalem. In some places he is called **Coniah** or **Jehoiachin**, both referring to **Jeconiah**.



We are told in **Jeremiah 22:28–30 (ESV)**

28 Is this man Coniah a despised, broken pot, a vessel no one cares for? Why are he and his children hurled and cast into a land that they do not know? 29 O land, land, land, hear the word of the Lord! 30 Thus says the Lord: ***“Write this man down as childless, a man who shall not succeed in his days, for none of his offspring shall succeed in sitting on the throne of David and ruling again in Judah.”***

Now the Divine Right as a King in Israel came through the Patriarchal bloodline, the Father. Here, we read that none of Coniah's bloodline will ever rule again on the throne of Israel. **PROBLEM** - Joseph is of Coniah's bloodline.

Now the Messiah had to come from the house of David in order to inherit the throne of David. Both Mary and Joseph were descendants of David. That is why you see **two genealogies** mentioned in the New Testament

- One in **Matthew tracing Josephs** ancestors back to David's son Solomon and continuing to Jeconiah... disqualifying Joseph and his descendants from ruling.
- But **Luke traces Mary's** ancestors back to David's through another son named **Nathan**

2. The Virgin Birth makes it possible for Jesus to be fully God and fully Human, yet without a sin nature

The bible teaches that Adam's original sin is transferred to us through the father. That is called the Doctrine of Federal Headship. That is why the original sin is attributed the Adam, even though Eve ate first, thus when God came looking for them it was Adam he called to an account.

But if Jesus had a human mother but a Divine Father, the guilt of original sin would not be transmitted. AND, Jesus would be 100% human and 100% God.

Mendel's law of genetics states that - Every individual is the sum total of the characteristics recessive or dominant in its two progenitors (2 parents) – genetically, all that is in your father and mother is in you. Those characteristics may be recessive (may be lying low) or dominant.

- Suppose the parents were both deity (he is God)
- Suppose both human (he is human)

Suppose his father is truly God, his mother is truly human (God-Man) ALL THAT IS IN THE FATHER is in the Son, and All that is in the MOTHER is in the Son. Making Jesus the GOD-MAN.

How then, should we view Mary?

While the Roman Catholic Church has done a lot of good in the world through funding advancements in medicine, science, and the arts.. this is one area that I could call on my Catholic friends to reconsider. Catholic Doctrine is very clear in regards to Mary.

NOW - keep in mind I am speaking of official Roman Catholic doctrine. If the Pope were here today, he would affirm this is the official Catholic position.

Like with Baptists, now all Catholics know exactly what the Church believes. So your Catholic friend may view Mary differently, but this is the official church positions.

a. Roman Catholics teach that Mary was virgin born

This is known as, **The Doctrine of the Immaculate Conception**

In 1854 Pope Pius IX issued the famous Papal Bull. It says, *"Mary was preserved by Immaculate Conception when conceived in her mother's body and was miraculously free from pollution of sin inherited from Adam. She was in soul and body holy, sinless, stainless, undefiled, pure innocence,"*

Nothing in scripture even alludes to that.

b. Roman Catholics teach that Mary was sinless.

The Roman Catholic Catechism from 1994, page 490, number 2030 says this, quote: *“The Church finds its example of holiness and recognizes its model and source in the all-holy Virgin Mary.”*

Page 348 of it says, “She is called the holy child and she progressed in perfection.” Born sinless, the all-holy virgin progressed in sinless perfection.”

Luke 1:46-47 (NASB95)

⁴⁶ And Mary said: “My soul exalts the Lord, ⁴⁷ And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. Only sinner’s stand in need of a Savior – Mary was a sinner who needed grace.

c. Roman Catholics teach that Mary maintained perpetual virginity

The Bible teaches in Matthew 13:55 that Mary and Joseph had other children: James, Joses, Simon, and Judas, daughters as well. After the immaculate conception, there were other children born to Mary and Joseph of ordinary means.

d. Roman Catholics teach that Mary was a Co-Redeemer with Jesus

Pope Pious XII: *“The Blessed Virgin Mary is to be called queen not only on account of her divine motherhood, but also because by the will of God she had a great part in the work of our salvation. In this work of redemption, the Blessed Virgin Mary was closely associated with her Christ, just as Christ because He redeemed us is by a special title our King and Lord, so too His blessed Mary are queen and our mistress because of the unique way in which she cooperated in our redemption. She provided her very substance for His body, she offered Him willingly for us and she took a unique part in our salvation by desiring it, praying for it and so obtaining it,” end quote.*

This is totally unbiblical, as a matter of fact Jeremiah the prophet warned in the strongest of terms against praying to the Queen of Heaven Jeremiah 7:17. Queen of Heaven was a title of the pagan idol ashtorah.

e. Roman Catholics teach that Mary is co-mediatrix

This would mean that there is not "one mediator between God and men" (1 Tim. 2:5), but they teach there are at least two: Mary and Jesus.

The Roman Church literally mirrors in Mary every single thing that is true about Christ... none of it is true about Mary.

By any honest definition, this is idolatry.

- Every Roman Catholic Cathedral I have been in, especially in Europe, images of Mary are the most prominent in the room. Above those of Christ.
- I’ve seen people kiss her image. Kneel before her statue. Pray to her.
- The Rosary is a series of 10 prayers. There are 5 Our Fathers, and 50 Hail Mary’s. For every one time you pray to God the Father, you pray 10 times to Mary.

Frankly, I think if Mary could see all of this, she would be absolutely sickened. MARY is highly favored, she is blessed, as such she is a model of virtue that we should hold up as an example for our daughters. But she also was a sinner in need of Savior, she gave birth to that savior - the Lord Jesus.

INVITATION ILLUSTRATION: Several years ago I met a Missionary who was serving in a region of Europe where Catholicism was dominant. I asked him, "How do you help Catholics to repent of Mary worship and come to true faith in Jesus Christ". I loved his answer, he said, "I tell them to faithfully obey the word of Mary in Scripture".

John 2:3–5 (ESV)

³ When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine."⁴ And Jesus said to her, "**Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come.**"⁵ His mother said to the servants, "**Do whatever he tells you.**"

The only command Mary ever gave in the Bible was - do whatever Jesus tells you. Follow that.