



Wonder of the Child.

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BIG IDEA – The simple and surprising way Jesus came into this world is a wonder to behold, cherish and share with others.

Scripture Focus – Luke 1:31 NLT

“You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus.”

When WONDER became rewritable.

The Wonderful World of Disney – The show broadcast on ABC in California @ 8:00 pm, every Sunday night from 1969 to 1979. 8:00pm meant that folks who went to church at 6:00pm, didn't normally get home until 8:30 or even 9:00pm!

Mutual of Omaha Wild Kingdom – Aired from 1963 to 1988, 29 seasons at 7:30pm on NBC every Sunday night. Our parents felt it was important to have some educational influence before being captivated by Disney magic.

Robin would see the commercials for Wonderful World of Disney, but was never able to watch it live on Sunday nights. Even if she were sick, which she says she never was, it wouldn't have been an excuse to stay home from church because they would pray over you and believe God to heal! She loved church! That wasn't the issue. The issue is all our friends talking about the Disney show the next day at school. **I think it was about that time, when she was young, she told her parents, “Someone should invent a machine that records television shows, like you record on a reel-to-reel (this was before 8-Track and Cassette tapes).**



VCRs changed history because you could make or record your own movies or buy/or rent a movie at the store. Rather than going to the movies, **you could create your entertainment.**

The same year we got married, in the early 80's, camcorders and VCRs (Video Cassette Recorders) became somewhat affordable.

Somehow one of the older guys at our church offered to record our wedding in January 1983. The technology was so new, neither of us really had a chance to realize what a gift it was to capture our wedding. He gave us two VHS tapes, one was the entire time leading up to the actual service, with people driving into the parking lot and just random shots of folks gathering and talking in the foyer. The other tape was the entire wedding service!

He gave us the tapes, but we had no way of viewing them. A year later, VCRs started becoming available for a lot of money – I remember it being \$500-600 dollars! We were broke, but we saved up enough to buy one. I've also been a gadget-nerd so I got it all hooked up to our little television. Cable TV was super cheap at the time because it was so new. I remember when the "Disney Channel" launched that year, so they began playing all the old Disney originals.

Because VCRs were so new, it was extremely exciting to try to figure out what to record. I have been a huge Star Trek fan, so when one of the Star Trek played **Star Trek: The Motion Picture** on TV, I just had to record it. The problem was we didn't have any blank VHS tapes! So, **I grabbed the only VHS tape I could think of – one of our Wedding Tapes!** No worries... it was the parking lot one!

I know it's awful, but I didn't just tape over a once-in-a-lifetime recorded moment – I did it twice! Because I accidentally recorded another Star Trek movie: Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home over a recording of the birth of one of our children.

The point I am making is this – it was an absolute epic moment when we were able to capture, record and replay, even share these significant events relatively easy!

We could relive moments that only previously existed in pictures or possibly words written in diaries. Now, they were in living (although low-res) color!

"This tape doesn't create the moment. It preserves it."

Luke is like an investigator with a camcorder—carefully preserving the moment so we can see it clearly from Mary's perspective. Matthew gives Joseph's angle—same event, different camera.

"Christmas is the moment God hit RECORD on redemption."

The promise, the plan and the place was all given ahead of time.

The parents were chosen before time began.

Who would accept this child?

Who would carry this child?

Who would raise this child?

Who is good enough, equipped enough to cooperatively handle this child for his childhood, his teens and young adulthood?

God chose the parents just like He chooses everyone who will be given the gift of being a part of the Kingdom of God.

What qualities does God look for in a couple that would raise God's only son?

Just a brief look at Mary and Joseph.

A look at the moment.

A look at what that means for all of us.

The news about the child finally comes into focus in the most spectacular way.



The wonder of interruption: Mary's magnanimous moment

A high-ranking angel tells Mary what is to come.

"In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, **God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a village in Galilee, to a virgin named Mary**. She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of King David. Gabriel appeared to her and said, "**Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you!**" Confused and disturbed, **Mary tried to think what the angel could mean**. "Don't be afraid, Mary," **the angel told her**, "**for you have found favor with God! You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the**

throne of his ancestor David. And he will reign over Israel forever; his Kingdom will never end!"'" Luke 1:26-33 NLT

Luke 1:28

New King James Version

And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!"

A holy visitation – Mary was the second person to hear from God after He broke 400+ years of silence. 400 hundred years – that's more than 16 generations! We barely track 3 generations – 400 years would take us back to our ancestral roots in other countries.

A highly complementary greeting - "kecharitōmenē" **highly favored** because receptivity to God's grace and eulogeó: To bless, to praise, to **speak well of among women**. **What woman would like to hear that God knows and sees the unique beauty of who they are and sovereignly chooses them?**

A reassuring reason for the visitation – Mary had found favor with God (God looks across the eons of time and actively seeks and sees those who have the kind of heart necessary to carry the amazing responsibility of taking part of His plans!)

Who else have we heard these words spoken to? Who else had found favor with God? Who else carried the burden and delight of doing His will?

In the Bible, "favor" is **less like a compliment** and **more like a calling indicator**. God's grace landing on a person for a purpose they didn't apply for.

A few key individuals who seemed to have captured God's attention were:

- **Noah** — "Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD" (Genesis 6:8). Context: judgment is coming; God appoints a deliverer and a new beginning.
- **Moses** — God says to Moses, "you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name" (Exodus 33:12–17). Context: national crisis after the golden calf; Moses is pulled into leadership, intercession, and God's presence.
- **David** — "David found favor in the sight of God" (Acts 7:46). Context: David's heart toward God's dwelling/presence; it leads into God's larger redemptive storyline (temple promise fulfilled ultimately in Christ, not merely a building).

And then there's Mary, a young woman, soon to grow up faster than any other human being in the history of the world – she would bear the Son of God.

Jesus is also mentioned of “favor with God and man.” It was not written that he “found favor” as a one-time announcement, but the same idea: “**Jesus grew... and in favor** with God and man” (Luke 2:52). Context: His life is marked by divine pleasure and purpose.

It was Mary's response that caught my attention.

This was a lot for a first-century Jewish betrothed 15+ year old.

Mary was immediately “diatarassó” deeply disturbed and completely “dialogizomai,” gob-smacked trying to reconcile what & why it was happening.

It's always struck me that later in Luke 2:19, Luke says of Mary, “She pondered!”

The angel instructed her that she would conceive and give birth to a son, and she will name him Jesus.

Mary pondered these things in her heart – **Mary had these moments of listening then a lifetime trying to understand what it all means!**

Luke 2:19 –

Contemporary English Version

But Mary kept thinking about all this and wondering what it meant.

Mary “suntéreó” (To preserve, to keep, to maintain, to guard closely) and “sumballó” (To consider, to ponder, to confer, to meet, to encounter – mentally threw them around)

What can we learn through Mary's experience as we've played back the “recording” of the wonder of Mary's interruption?

- **God's favor can feel frightening before it feels comforting.**
- Mary's first reactions: *disturbed and trying to reason it out* (“**What does God want? Why me?**”).
- **There is real tension: God's calling collides with what she sees as her limitations (age, status, plans, understanding).**
- **Mary wrestles with the cost which she can already see: Her reputation, relationships, safety, future.**
- **Mary quickly moves from confusion, maybe even frustration to surrender— not because she understands, but because she trusts God's character.**

Faith doesn't give clarity; it gives consent!

What about Joseph, Jesus' foster dad?



The wonder of disruption: Joseph's experience

After Matthew goes through a very specific and detailed genealogical proof of authoritative of Jesus having the legitimate right to the throne of David –

Matthew 1:18-21 immediately begins with the facts about Jesus' parents' circumstances.



DIG DEEPER: [Namesake](#) Pastor Jacob Gerber

The angel addresses Joseph by his namesake, his rightful title reminding him of who he is.

The title, "Joseph, son of David". Now, what this title is getting at is a reminder of all that is at stake in what Joseph is planning on doing to divorce Mary. Because Joseph is the son of David, remember, the son of David is the one who is legally the one to succeed the throne after David. Now, there hadn't been an Israelite king on the throne of David for quite some time, but God had made a covenant with David, promising that God would never let there be a lack of a king on the throne of David through all their generations. That promise had to be refilled by restoring a rightful king to the throne of David. Joseph, as we read in the genealogy in verses two through 16 of chapter one, Joseph is this rightful recipient of this lineage. He is the rightful son of David. If he divorces Mary, as he intends to, then Jesus will not merely be born out of wedlock, Jesus will not inherit the legal status as the son of David. He'll be born apart, outside this lineage. He won't have this legal status as the son of David.

Matthew 1:18-21 NLT

This is how Jesus the Messiah was born. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. But before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit. Joseph, to whom she was engaged, was a righteous man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he decided to break the engagement quietly. As he considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. "Joseph, son of David," the angel said, "do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit. And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

- He writes emphatically that Jesus the Messiah was born.
- His mother, Mary was engaged to Joseph.
- Before the marriage took place, while still a virgin, he writes, “What is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit”



DIG DEEPER: The difference a word makes

One angel tells Mary she would “conceive, sullambanō” but told Joseph that Mary would “conceive, gennēthen.” Why the difference in the word being used?

Luke and Matthew are making **slightly different emphases, and the grammar matters.**

Luke to Mary: συλλήμψῃ (sullambanō) — “you will conceive”

- **Form:** 2nd person singular, future (active/middle depending on parsing), direct address: “**you will conceive in the womb.**”
- **Luke** focuses on **Mary’s lived, bodily experience**—the fact that she will become pregnant.
- **Color:** συλλαμβάνω can carry the concrete idea of “take/receive” (and in pregnancy contexts, “conceive”), which fits Luke’s earthy, human-angle storytelling.

Matthew to Joseph: τὸ ... γεννηθὲν (gennēthen, from γεννάω) — “the thing begotten/conceived in her”

- **Form:** aorist **passive** participle: “**what has been generated/begotten in her.**”
- **Sense:** focuses less on Mary’s experience and more on **origin/source**—especially because Matthew immediately adds, “**is from the Holy Spirit.**”
- **Why passive matters: it subtly shifts agency away from human action.** **Joseph’s question is implicitly, “Who did this?”** Matthew’s words answers generally what a man needs to hear, “Not you, not another man—**God did.**”

The big-picture difference.

- **Luke (Mary-facing): What will happen to you?** → “You will conceive...”
- **Matthew (Joseph-facing): Where did this come from?** → “What is conceived/begotten in her is from the Holy Spirit.”

Matthew then writes about Joseph’s experience, also stating quick, to the point facts about how he felt upon hearing the news (presumably from Mary).

- He was a righteous man.

- He did not want to disgrace her publicly. So, at this brief moment, his normal thought was she was either unfaithful or taken advantage of!
- He decided to break off the engagement quietly – “secretly, sending her away.” “apoluó,” To release from, to set free, to dismiss, to send away to divorce.

It was while he considered all of this! **Joseph did his own “pre-pondering” as he was finalizing his decisions.**

An angel of the Lord came to him in a dream saying:

- **Don’t be afraid to take Mary to be your wife.** It is good that men would need godly advice and encouragement to do the right thing!
- **The child within her was “gennēthen” (beget) conceived by the Holy Spirit.** See the DIG DEEPER note on why that word is important. Not a question of how, but who? **The angel was quick to shut off suspicious thinking – and Matthew makes that evident!**
- **She will have a son, and you are to name him Jehoshua, which means “Yahweh saves.”** Even though an angel had already told Mary what to name the children, this was a word for Joseph. Besides, In that culture, naming functioned as a public claim of fatherhood/household membership—Joseph is legally embracing Jesus as his son.

What can we learn through Joseph’s experience as we’ve played back the “recording” of Joseph’s wonder of disruption?

- **God meets him differently: not in a visual, in-person visitation, but in a dream**—God speaks into the place where Joseph is processing privately.
- **Righteous doesn’t mean we won’t be shaken to our core.**
- **Joseph’s first reactions: grief, protective love, and an attempt to do the “least damaging” thing** (quiet divorce).
- **His crisis isn’t abstract theology**—it’s betrayal, shame, and the fear of being a fool.
- **The obedience required:** take Mary as his wife, accept social fallout, adopt a child not biologically his, and name him Jesus.

Obedience is often choosing what’s right over what’s easy.



The wonder of incarnation: THE child has come.

Luke is the one who captures the moment of Christ’s birth

And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born. She gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no lodging available for them. Luke 2:6-7

And in the wonder of that moment THE long-awaited promise of THE child has arrived.

As stated before, it wasn't in a palace, it wasn't even in Joseph and Mary's hometown, surrounded by local friends and family. It was in that small but significant city called Bethlehem.

Whether one believes he was born among the animals in a spare room of a local home, or at Migdal Eder, which means "Tower of the Flock."

It does not matter if you believe the manger was makeshift cradle or a cattle-crib filled with hay. This is not the point of the story and sometimes even distracts us from the power of this once in a global lifetime, this earthshattering truth – Jesus Christ was born.

The wonder of wonders was this child!

This was not God sending someone — This was God coming himself.

APPLICATION

- **What the Child means to humanity:**
 - God is not distant; he enters our suffering and our story.
 - God doesn't just forgive; he restores, heals, and reclaims humanity from the inside out.
 - God's promise is not vague inspiration; it's not a religious theory or perspective; it's a Person with a name and a mission: **Jesus = "The Lord saves."**
- **What the Child means to us personally in chaotic days:**
 - We are not abandoned — God is with us.
 - Our chaos cannot stop God's plan—he specializes in holy interruptions.
 - Our future isn't just survival—it's secured resurrection hope.

If God can interrupt and disrupt Mary and Joseph's plans, we can celebrate when He interrupts and disrupts our plans. Because we know, he doesn't come to condemn, but to save.

This wonder isn't just a moment to behold or to cherish. It's a moment to share the replay of the true & epic way that Jesus came to earth, becoming one of us to save all of us!

SCRIPTURES

Luke 1:26-33 NLT

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Luke 1:28 NKJV

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Luke 2:19 CEV

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birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no lodging available for them.



DIG DEEPER NOTES



WHY THE VCR AND VHS TAPES WERE SO IMPORTANT

It's easy to look at these pieces of technology and wonder why they were so crucial to the history of American culture. Those who grew up during the time of VCR history understand why they were so important in changing family life.

First, before mainstream VCRs, television was restricted to a small range of channels. You were at the mercy of whatever the broadcaster wanted to play, including when they wanted to broadcast a show. In other words, home entertainment options were limited, and the viewer had no control over this.

VHS tapes changed matters because you could buy a movie at the store, and rather than going to the cinema, you could create your entertainment.

A familiar sight back in the day was siblings fighting over who got to record their favorite TV shows. It was a staple of growing up during the final decades of the 20th century.



Sequence of Jesus' Birth Events

Mary hears → conception occurs → Joseph discovers pregnancy → Joseph receives his dream-message.

Matthew's annunciation (to Joseph) is narrated later: it happens after Mary is already pregnant ("before they came together") and after Joseph has decided to divorce her quietly; then an angel appears to him in a dream (Matt. 1:18–25). Functionally, Matthew is telling the same crisis moment from Joseph's vantage point, not re-telling Luke's scene.

When were Matthew and Luke written?

There isn't a single universally agreed date, but mainstream critical dating looks like this:

Matthew: written after 70 CE, often placed in the 70–80/90 CE range; Britannica notes it was composed in Greek after 70 and shows dependence on Mark.

Luke: commonly dated around ~80 CE (or 80–90 CE), though some argue earlier; Britannica's longer "biblical literature" entry dates Luke about c. 80.

What were their sources?

Shared backbone (Synoptic relationships)

Both Matthew and Luke use Mark heavily (Luke often follows Mark's sequence; Matthew uses almost all of Mark).

Both also share material not in Mark, which strongly suggests a second shared source/tradition (often discussed as "Q" in scholarship). Britannica explicitly describes Matthew using "sayings from Q," and notes Matthew/Luke share material not found in Mark.

Each has distinctive material

Matthew includes material "peculiar only to Matthew" (often called "M" by scholars).

Luke contains extensive unique material (often called "L"), and his prologue claims he worked from earlier accounts and eyewitness traditions and wrote an "orderly account" after careful investigation.

Infancy narratives (why the annunciations feel so different)

Matthew and Luke's birth stories have very little overlap and are built around different focal characters—Joseph in Matthew, Mary in Luke—suggesting they drew from largely independent infancy traditions (or shaped distinct traditions for distinct theological aims).