

The Annunciation

Hear these familiar words from Luke 1:26-28 (NIV):

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

Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. 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, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

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

The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon 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. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. For nothing is impossible with God."

"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said." Then the angel left her.

Through His angel, Gabriel, God came to a Jewish teenage girl, just as He had come to Noah, Abraham, Moses, and more. He came making lavish demands and lavish promises. God offered her the privilege of taking part in His timeless plan of salvation.

This girl would become the mother of His Son, so God gave her the clearest picture to date of Who the Child would be:

1. For the first time, we hear His name: Jesus. It's the Greek form of the Hebrew name, "Joshua," which means, "The Lord saves." Matthew 1:21 adds that He would be given that name "because he will save his people from their sins".
2. He would be given the throne of His father David, and He would reign forever. In other words, He would be the Messiah promised by God's prophets for so many centuries, the Deliverer that every faithful Jew eagerly anticipated.
3. He would be the Son of the Most High, of God Himself, but in a fuller way than David or any other king had been. The Holy Spirit, the power of the Most High, would Himself conceive the child. Every other human child receives God's life

passed along through uncounted human fathers and human generations. This child would receive God's life directly from Almighty God Himself, with no human male in-between. Any of the Old Testament prophets would have been stunned to receive such a message. Only the Child's mother was told, the girl who would be involved in this marvelous, amazing transaction.

For hundreds of years God had been making promises to His people. He had promised
a Prince,
a Shepherd,
a Healer,
a Conqueror,
a Prophet,
a Priest,
a Lion and a Lamb.

He had promised Peace. He had promised Freedom. He had promised Love and Life without end.

Finally, all the promises were about to be delivered, wrapped together as one magnificent Promise. The Promise was to be a Baby. The Promise was to be Immanuel. The Promise was to be God Himself.

Christmas reminds us of two truths we must never forget:

- 1. God is faithful to His promises, generation after generation.*
- 2. God brings divine beauty and purity out of our humanity.*

Listen & Sing: "The Promise"

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