

**A Model of Faith, Submission, and Unconditional Obedience!**

<sup>a</sup> **Luke 1:38** – A young unmarried girl who became pregnant risked disaster. Unless the father of the child agreed to marry her, she would probably remain unmarried for life. If her own father rejected her, she could be forced into begging or prostitution in order to earn her living. And Mary, with her story about becoming pregnant by the Holy Spirit, risked being considered crazy as well. Still Mary said, despite the possible risks, *“May everything You have said about me come true.”* When Mary said that, she didn’t know about the tremendous opportunity she would have. She only knew that God was asking her to serve Him, and she willingly obeyed. Jesus said, *“If anyone is willing to do His will – He shall know…”*. If we believe God and take steps of willing obedience to what He first says to us [in His Word], we will discover more of His plan for us. If we require of God to reveal everything to us that we want to know before acting by faith in obedience to what He has asked of us – we are not living by faith – “And it is impossible to please God without faith.” Don’t wait to see the bottom line before surrendering your life to Him and obeying what He says. Following, submission to, & obeying God is how you live & experience the adventure of following Him!

<sup>a</sup> Adapted from the Life Application Bible, New Living Translation, Large Print Edition, Tyndale, p. 2,174

Mary graciously accepted this role with all the burdens and accusations that would accompany it.

**READ** **Luke 1:38** Mary responded, *“I am the Lord’s servant. May everything you have said about me come true.”* And then the angel left her.

Conclusion

A biblical mystery is a truth of God revealed to us. It doesn’t have to fit into our understanding.

Christmas is a season of mystery.

Christmas celebrates the fact that God became flesh and came to earth in the person of Jesus to offer salvation to all who believe and accept Him.

**RESPOND** (Application for this week) **WHAT** was the most significant scripture for you this week? \_\_\_\_\_

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**WHY** are those scriptures *significant to you at this time in your life?* \_\_\_\_\_

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**HOW** can you practically apply what God spoke to you about this week? \_\_\_\_\_

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**WHAT** will be the time frame for your application?

(1) Start Date \_\_\_\_\_ (2) *Progress* Check Date(s) \_\_\_\_\_ (3) Finish Date \_\_\_\_\_

**WHO** I can ask to hold me accountable for my application: \_\_\_\_\_

**Sermon-Based Devotional**

Lawrence Free Methodist Church

(Based on a Sermon by Pastor Bill Bump on December 3, 2017)

**THE ANGELIC ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Series: Luke**

\*Note – There is an OVERVIEW of Luke available on the kiosk where you pick up this Devotional. You may find it helpful in your study and processing of the sermon and this Sermon-Based Devotional.

Christmas is the celebration of the birth of Jesus, who invaded the spiritual darkness of our fallen world and became our Savior.

A biblical mystery refers to the activities of God, which are unknown to man except by revelation.

Luke’s purpose in writing his Gospel was for the world to clearly see that Jesus is the Savior of the world. Luke begins his account by showing how God prepared the world stage to receive Jesus.

Galatians 4:4 *But when the right time came, God sent His Son, born of a woman, subject to the law.*

For 400 years, the people of Israel had not heard a word from any prophet. In the midst of this spiritual darkness, Luke records, God began to act.

**READ** **Luke 1:5-9** **Mark everything that stands out to you.**

<sup>5</sup> *When Herod was king of Judea, there was a Jewish priest named Zechariah. He was a member of the priestly order of Abijah, and his wife, Elizabeth, was also from the priestly line of Aaron. <sup>6</sup> Zechariah and Elizabeth were righteous in God’s eyes, careful to obey all of the Lord’s commandments and regulations. <sup>7</sup> They had no children because Elizabeth was unable to conceive, and they were both very old.*

<sup>8</sup> *One day Zechariah was serving God in the Temple, for his order was on duty that week. <sup>9</sup> As was the custom of the priests, he was chosen by lot to enter the sanctuary of the Lord and burn incense.*

<sup>a</sup> **Luke 1:5** – A Jewish priest was a minister of God who worked at the Temple managing its upkeep, teaching the people the Scriptures, and directing the worship services. Zechariah was a member of the order of Abijah, on duty this particular week. Each morning a priest was to enter the Holy Place in the Temple and burn incense. The priests would cast lots to decide who would enter the inner sanctuary, and one day the lot fell to Zechariah. But it was not by chance that Zechariah was on duty and that he was chosen that day to enter the Holy Place—perhaps once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. God was guiding the events of history to prepare the way for Jesus to come to earth.

<sup>a</sup> Adapted from the Life Application Bible, New Living Translation, Large Print Edition, Tyndale, p. 2,171

**REFLECT** Write your thoughts from **Luke 1:5-9**. I.E. God sure orchestrated a lot of things to happen in the lives of various people in order to bring about His plan and purposes! It reminds me of the passage: “I know that You can do all things, and that no thought or purpose of Yours can be restrained or thwarted” (Job 42:2, The Amplified Bible).

**THE KEYS** to knowing God’s plan & being secure in Him are to recognize & listen to the voice of the Lord. If you would like suggestions or help in learning how to listen to the voice of God and walk with Him:

Men: contact Pastor Larry at [baldridge.larry@gmail.com](mailto:baldridge.larry@gmail.com)

Women: contact Beth Baldrige at [bethbaldridge@gmail.com](mailto:bethbaldridge@gmail.com)

Elizabeth and Zechariah were very *spiritual people*.

Zechariah was given a very special *honor* that enabled him to go into the *sanctuary* of God in the Temple.

This set the stage for the first *angelic announcement*.

**READ Luke 1:10-13** Mark what stands out to you.

<sup>10</sup> While the incense was being burned, a great crowd stood outside, praying.

<sup>11</sup> While Zechariah was in the sanctuary, an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the incense altar. <sup>12</sup> Zechariah was shaken and overwhelmed with fear when he saw him. <sup>13</sup> But the angel said, “Don’t be afraid, Zechariah! God has heard your prayer. Your wife, Elizabeth, will give you a son, and you are to name him John.”

Zechariah was *shocked* at this news. It is *human nature* to doubt the supernatural.

**READ Luke 1:18-20** Mark what stands out to you.

<sup>18</sup> Zechariah said to the angel, “How can I be sure this will happen? I’m an old man now, and my wife is also well along in years.” <sup>19</sup> Then the angel said, “I am Gabriel! I stand in the very presence of God. It was HE who sent me to bring you this good news!

<sup>20</sup> But now, since you didn’t believe what I said, you will be silent and unable to speak until the child is born. For my words will certainly be fulfilled at the proper time.”

**REFLECT** Write your thoughts from the above two passages. I.E. Zechariah was a priest – yet he still had fears & doubts. In spite of his fear & doubt, God still used him – though he experienced some limitations due to his shortcomings. [Now write your observations & thoughts.]

Gabriel gave Zechariah a sign that would be a *reminder* of the promise given to him.

Then came the second *angelic announcement*.

**READ Luke 1:26-28** Mark what stands out to you.

<sup>26</sup> In the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a village in Galilee, <sup>27</sup> to a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of King David. <sup>28</sup> Gabriel appeared to her and said, “Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you!”

<sup>a</sup> **Luke 1:26** – Gabriel appeared not only to Zechariah and to Mary but also to the prophet Daniel more than 500 years earlier (Daniel 8:15-17; 9:21). Each time Gabriel appeared, he brought important messages from God.

Nazareth, Joseph and Mary’s hometown, was a long way from Jerusalem, the center of Jewish life and worship. Located on a major trade route, Nazareth was frequently visited by Gentile merchants and Roman soldiers. It was known for its independent and aloof attitude. Jesus was born in Bethlehem but grew up in Nazareth. Nevertheless, the people of Nazareth would reject Him as the Messiah (Luke 4:22-30).

<sup>a</sup> **Luke 1:27, 28** – Mary was young, poor, female—all characteristics that, to the people of her day, would make her seem unusable by God for any major task. But God chose Mary for one of the most important acts of obedience He has ever demanded of anyone. You may feel that your ability, experience, or education makes you an unlikely candidate for God’s service. Don’t limit God’s choices. He can use you if you trust Him.

<sup>a</sup> Adapted from the Life Application Bible, New Living Translation, Large Print Edition, Tyndale, p. 2,173

The doctrine of the *Virgin Birth* is a *pivotal* doctrine for us.

Isaiah 7:14 *All right then, the Lord Himself will give you the sign. Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son and will call Him Immanuel (which means ‘God is with us’).*

Gabriel *predicted* what Jesus would *be and do*.

**READ Luke 1:29-33** Mark what stands out to you.

<sup>29</sup> Confused and disturbed, Mary tried to think what the angel could mean. <sup>30</sup> “Don’t be afraid, Mary,” the angel told her, “for you have found favor with God! <sup>31</sup> You will conceive & give birth to a Son, & you will name Him Jesus. <sup>32</sup> 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. <sup>33</sup> And He will reign over Israel forever; His Kingdom will never end!”

<sup>a</sup> **Luke 1:30, 31** – God’s favor does not automatically bring instant success or fame. His blessing on Mary, the honor of being the mother of the Messiah, would lead to much pain; her peers would ridicule her; her fiancé would come close to leaving her; her Son would be rejected and murdered. But through her Son would come the world’s only hope, and this is why Mary has been praised by countless generations. Her submission was part of God’s plan to bring about our salvation. If sorrow weighs you down and dims your hope, think of Mary’s submissive heart and wait patiently for God to finish working out His plan.

**Luke 1:31** – Jesus, a Greek form of the Hebrew name *Joshua*, was a common name meaning “the LORD saves.” Just as Joshua had led Israel into the Promised Land (See Joshua 1:1, 2), so Jesus would lead His people into eternal life. The symbolism of His name was not lost on the people of His day, who took names seriously and saw them as a source of power. In Jesus’ name, people were healed, demons were banished, and sins were forgiven.

<sup>a</sup> **Luke 1:32, 33** – Centuries earlier, God had promised David that David’s kingdom would last forever (2 Samuel 7:16). This promise was fulfilled in the coming of Jesus, a direct descendant of David, whose Kingdom will never end.

<sup>a</sup> Adapted from the Life Application Bible, New Living Translation, Large Print Edition, Tyndale, p. 2,174

The first person ever to *question* the Virgin Birth was *Mary* herself.

**READ Luke 1:34-37** Mark what stands out to you.

<sup>34</sup> Mary asked the angel, “But how can this happen? I am a virgin.” <sup>35</sup> The angel replied, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So, the baby to be born will be holy, and He will be called the Son of God. <sup>36</sup> What’s more, your relative Elizabeth has become pregnant in her old age! People used to say she was barren, but she has conceived a son and is now in her sixth month. <sup>37</sup> For the word of God will never fail.”

**REFLECT** Write your thoughts from Luke 1:34-37. I.E. Long before this, God said to Jeremiah during his ministry (627-586 B.C.) – “Call to Me, and I will answer you, and I will tell you great and mighty things, which you do not know.” (Jer. 33:3, NASB) *Mary called [prayed] and asked God the question in verse 34 – & the Lord spoke to her to reveal His plan & power to her.*

<sup>a</sup> **Luke 1:34** – The birth of Jesus to a virgin is a miracle that many people find hard to believe. These three facts can aid our faith: (1) Luke was a medical doctor, and he knew perfectly well how babies are made. It would have been just as difficult for him to believe in a virgin birth as it is for us, yet he reports it as fact. (2) Luke was a painstaking researcher who based his Gospel on eyewitness accounts. Tradition holds that he talked with Mary about the event he recorded in the first two chapters. This is Mary’s story, not a fictional invention. (3) Christians and Jews, who worship God as the Creator of the universe, should have no doubts that God who has the power to create life, has the power to create a child in a virgin’s womb.

<sup>a</sup> Adapted from the Life Application Bible, New Living Translation, Large Print Edition, Tyndale, p. 2,174