



IMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH

SERIES: WHO IS JESUS

TITLE: THE MIRACULOUS ONE

SCRIPTURE: LUKE 1:26-38

DATE: MARCH 15, 2026

INTRODUCTION

We are in the second week of our “Who Is Jesus?” series. Last week, we discussed how Jesus is the *Promised One*. We looked at the first promise of Jesus found in Genesis 3:15, where we are told that the offspring of the woman will bruise the serpent’s head, and the serpent will bruise the heel of the woman’s offspring.

This week, we turn our attention to Jesus as the *Miraculous One*. Many of us know that Jesus performed many miracles. Yet, our focus in identifying Jesus as the Miraculous One is on His divine and human nature. Jesus was born miraculously through a virgin birth, whereby He was fully God and fully man. Our lesson will cover Luke 1:26–38, where we see the angel Gabriel inform Mary of God’s favor toward her and that she will conceive a son whom she is to name Jesus.

Potential Discussion Starter:

The process of naming children often has a story behind it. In our story today, we see that Mary did not get to “come up with” the name Jesus; rather, the name was assigned by an angel. Perhaps a few of you can share how you came up with the names of your children.

Text

Luke 1:26–28

26 In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, 27 to a virgin betrothed^[b] to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. 28 And he came to her and said, “Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!”^[c] 29 But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. 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 And Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?”^[d]

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^[e] will be called holy—the Son of God. 36 And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. 37 For nothing will be impossible with God.” 38 And Mary said, “Behold, I am the servant^[f] of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.

Explanation

Context

The Gospel of Luke begins with two birth stories, and they both have some similarities.

In the first story, we hear about the foretelling of the birth of John the Baptist. He will be born miraculously to a priest named Zechariah and his wife,

Elizabeth. Luke describes them as righteous people who are advanced in age. We learn that they had been without children and that Elizabeth had been barren.

The angel Gabriel appeared to Zechariah while he was serving in the temple in Jerusalem. He announced that God had heard their prayer for a child. They would bear a son and were to name him John. The baby would serve a special purpose. The child would be great, and in his mission, John would go in the power of Elijah to turn the hearts of fathers to their children. He would prepare the people for the Lord.

Upon hearing this, Zechariah questioned, “How shall I know this?” The question seems to arise out of doubt since he and his wife were old in age. Because of his doubt, Gabriel told him that he would become mute until the child was born.

The second birth story in Luke chapter 1 is our text of study. In this story, we see another foretelling of a birth. This birth, too, will be miraculous—but on a much grander level. Gabriel visits the mother. The name of the child has already been determined. And we see that this baby also has a mission, fulfilling another prophecy. The mother also questions how the birth can take place.

These similarities reveal to us that God is at work. Indeed, a special work is about to unfold. While there are similarities, there are also differences that elevate the birth of Jesus. Jesus will indeed be greater than John.

The Setting

Elizabeth is now six months pregnant. God had fulfilled His promise to Zechariah and Elizabeth. God again sends Gabriel to a city of Galilee named Nazareth.

Galilee is a region west of the Sea of Galilee. Its size is roughly the same as Rhode Island. Jesus would spend much of His public ministry in that region. The city mentioned is Nazareth. This city was very small and humble. Nathanael, one of Jesus’ disciples, once commented, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” (John 1:46). Thus, the general attitude toward Nazareth was somewhat disdainful. Matthew 2:23 tells us that Jesus lived in Nazareth as a child and this fulfilled the prophecy that He would be called a Nazarene.

It is a stark contrast that Gabriel visits Mary in Nazareth, whereas he had visited Zechariah in the Jerusalem temple.

Gabriel Greets Mary

We are introduced to Mary and Joseph. They are betrothed, or engaged. Today, we often think of engagement as a promise to become legally married. In our culture, breaking an engagement has no legal consequences. One difference in Jewish culture was that engagement was legally binding. The legally binding nature of being betrothed is evidenced by Joseph considering to divorce her quietly in Matthew's account.

The text is clear that Mary is a virgin, mentioning it on three occasions (1:27, 34). The similarities and contrasts with Elizabeth are evident once more. Elizabeth and Mary will both have miraculous births. Yet, Mary's birth will be of a greater degree. Some in the Bible gave birth in old age or despite barrenness, yet only Mary will give birth as a virgin.

Mary is betrothed to Joseph, who we are told was of the house of David. This means his ancestry traced back to King David from the Old Testament. We will explain why this is significant later in the lesson. Zechariah was a priest from the tribe of Levi. Joseph was from the kingly tribe of Judah.

Gabriel greets Mary: "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" Gabriel comes with goodwill. He addresses Mary as "favored one" because the news he is about to share is not the result of her own righteous deeds or merit. God has graciously chosen her. She is the object of God's merciful choice. God indeed has a special task for her.

Normally, when an angel appears in the Bible, people are startled. We presume Mary was as well, since Gabriel soon tells her, "Do not be afraid." Yet what troubled Mary most was not Gabriel's appearance as much as his words. She tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be.

Admittedly, there could have been much for Mary to discern. Why favored? Why is the Lord with me? Why would an angel come to small-town Nazareth of all places? What is about to happen? Certainly, God's favor is not something to fear. The angel has exciting news to share and begins to help her understand.

Foretelling the Birth of Jesus

Gabriel tells Mary that she will conceive a son and is to name Him Jesus. The baby will grow within her womb like any other baby. The name Jesus means “The Lord saves.” Gabriel would later tell Joseph that he was to call the baby Jesus, “for he will save his people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21).

Gabriel similarly told Zechariah to name his son John (which means “The Lord has shown favor”). Yet Jesus will have additional titles. According to the angel, He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. Later, Gabriel says He will be called holy—the Son of God (v. 35). Thus, this child will be Mary’s son and the Son of God.

Gabriel continues explaining that God “will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” These words describe the fulfillment of God’s promise to King David in 2 Samuel 7:12–16 which reads,

I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³ He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. ¹⁴ I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men,¹⁵ but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. ¹⁶ And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.

In that passage, God promises that one of David’s descendants would be like a son to Him and that his kingdom would last forever. Gabriel tells Mary that the child in her womb will fulfill this prophecy. Since Joseph is of the lineage of David, this prophesy can be fulfilled.

How Will This Be?

Mary asks, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?” It is helpful to compare this with Zechariah’s question. Zechariah seemed to ask out of doubt and was disciplined. Mary’s question appears to arise from belief, not disbelief. She is not asking if God will do this, but how He will do it. It is as if she is saying, “My ‘yes’ is already on the table—now tell me what I need to know so I can obey.”

Gabriel answers that it will occur by a miracle. The Holy Spirit will come upon her, and the power of the Most High will overshadow her. Through the Holy Spirit, a child will be conceived in her womb. This baby will not be like any other human born. Jesus will be born holy. He will rightly be called the Son of God.

Theologians call this the *incarnation*—meaning that deity took on flesh. The theological significance of the virgin birth is immense. Jesus will not inherit a sinful nature from Adam. As the angel described, Jesus will be holy from birth.

This also means Jesus is fully human. He is born of Mary as a baby and will experience life as a human. Thus, theologians conclude that Jesus was fully God and fully man—100% God and 100% man. This was made possible through the virgin birth and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Other Scriptures confirm:

- Gal. 4:4-5 - ⁴But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, ⁵to redeem those who were under the law,
- Heb. 2:14 - “Since therefore the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things”
- Heb. 2:17-18 - “Therefore he had to be made like his brothers and sisters in every respect so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For because he himself has suffered when tempted he is able to help those who are being tempted.”
- John 1:14 - “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

Gabriel also informs Mary of Elizabeth’s pregnancy. As evidence that God can perform miraculous births, Mary can observe Elizabeth’s pregnancy in her old age. God performed a miracle in the birth of John, who will prepare the way for the Lord. God is now doing an even greater miracle in the birth of Jesus. Mary can trust that nothing is impossible with God.

I Am Your Servant

Mary responds in faith and obedience: “I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.”

There are many exciting aspects of Gabriel's announcement. She appears to be the first person to hear about God's plan to save the world. She will bear the child Israel has long awaited. She will bear the Son of David. She is clearly favored by God for this special task.

At the same time, she may have pondered the challenges ahead. How would Joseph respond? Would others believe her? These are reasonable questions. We learn from Matthew's Gospel that Joseph initially assumed Mary had committed adultery and intended to divorce her quietly. Only after an angel appeared to him did he remain with her. Despite potential fears and challenges, Mary believed. She trusted the Lord's word. She chose to be the Lord's servant no matter the circumstance.

Discussion Questions

- How many descriptions of Jesus can you identify from this text? And what does each description mean?
- What are some of the comparison and contrasts with the birth foretelling of John the Baptist and with the foretelling of Jesus?
- Can you explain why a virgin birth is theologically important?
- What stands out to you about Mary in this story?
- Does anything stand out to you about how Gabriel spoke to Mary?
- How do you perceive culture at large perceive the birth account of Jesus? Do you think culture at large *accepts* the virgin birth? Considers it a fable tied to Christmas? Or something else?

Conclusions or Application

JESUS THE MIRACULOUS ONE

Some have criticized the biblical account of Jesus' birth claiming that a virgin birth is impossible. They may say that no one has ever been born from a virgin, thus the biblical account of a virgin birth must be a fable or that well intentioned Christians made it up.

Yet the biblical story hinges on the virgin birth. In fact, 1 John 4:2 implies that the virgin birth is an essential doctrine when it reads, "By this you know the

Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God.” This means if you deny the virgin birth then you are excluding yourself from true Christianity.

We can be certain that the virgin birth occurred for several convincing reasons. First, the virgin birth was prophesied. Isaiah 7:14 says, “Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.” Second, we also see evidence of the virgin birth in the account of Mary and Joseph. The record we have of Joseph reveals that he knew he was not the father of the child in Mary’s womb. When he discovered her pregnancy, his reaction was to divorce her quietly. We learn that the only reason he changed his mind was because he learned what God was doing through another angel. Third, we also see evidence in the life of Jesus. His life demonstrated that He was indeed God and of a different nature than all of human beings. His numerous miracles give testimony that He was God in flesh. Furthermore, His sinless life also bore witness that He was conceived not by man. For everyone person ever born has inherited a sinful nature and has chosen sin. Yet, Jesus was without sin and no one could accuse Him of sin. Thus, we see the necessity of a virgin birth so that Jesus can be fully God and fully man.