

"BIRTH OF JESUS FOREFOOTOLD"

Luke 1:26-38 (32)

"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"

As believers who is Jesus to us, most of us would say, he is our saviour. This passage reveals how Jesus was brought into this world. Moreover it also reveals who Jesus is. Through Mary we shall see how the entry of Jesus into our lives disturbs everything. The entry of Jesus into this world and our lives can never leave us living the same way. Same time, His entry into our lives brings hope for our lives. Because Jesus is the Messiah, our saviour God who takes all the power of sin and death. I pray that we may celebrate with great joy the history of the entry of Jesus into this world, for only through Jesus is there reason and meaning to hope and to live. Amen.

Look at verse 26, "In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to a town in Galilee called Nazareth," Nazareth was a small village north eastern of Jerusalem, not really the nicest place. It was known for corruption and low moral values. The angel Gabriel was sent to a woman called Marry, who was pledged in marriage to a man named Joseph [27]. We are also told that Marry was a virgin which is applaudable given the low morals in Nazareth. Let us now look at how the angel greeted Mary, look at verse 28, "The angel appeared to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favoured! The Lord is with you." Mary was greeted with two affirmations, you who are highly favoured and the Lord is with you. What does it mean that she is highly favoured, it means that she was under the amazing grace of God. This grace is alive because God was with Marry. Remember verse 26 said, God sent the angel Gabriel. The angel Gabriel did not just come to Marry out of his own initiative he was sent by God. The Lord has been with Marry watching her, guiding her life through His grace. Now the angel Gabriel had come to Marry, not just to greet and affirm her but for a particular reason which is the main point of today's message. Let us first look at how Marry responded to the angel's greeting.

Look at verse 29-30, "Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. 30So the angel told her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God." Notice that Mary was troubled by the words the angel uttered and not necessarily the angel Gabriel. Mary's response to the angel goes to show her humility and fear of God. Her immediate response was fear instead of feeling rightful to have earned God's favour. The angel Gabriel could see Mary's fear and encouraged Mary not to be afraid because she had found favour with God. Marry had found God's favour because God had chosen her for a very import task. A task that was even greater than Marry. Let us look at verse 31, "Behold, you will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to give Him the name Jesus." Can you imagine being told that you will be pregnant at any moment while you are still virgin. Mary was to name the child Jesus. Jesus is a transliteration from the Hebrew name Joshua to the Greek name Jesus and the name Joshua means, the Lord saves.

Why would the lord also be willing to place Marry in such a situation? Is it fair for Marry, is it worth it? For Marry to sacrifice so much in her life, to surrender her marriage, her life dreams and her ideas of how she would have children with Joseph. Who is this child that she will bring into this world? Let us all look at verse 32-33, "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, 33and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever. His kingdom will never end!" Through Marry Jesus would be born into this world, Jesus will not just be a son, there are a number of things that are said about him. First, he will be great. We have come to know about a number of great people in the world, Nelson Mandela, mother Teresa, Martin Luther King Jr, Mahatma Ghandi and many great heroes that I cannot include here. However, non of all these people is greater than Jesus because only **Jesus is the Son of the most high God**. Jesus greatness does not depend on his human qualities and achievements, but on the fact that Jesus is the Son of the most High God. Jesus is great because he obeyed the will of God to the end. Secondly, the Lord God will give

him the throne of His father David. All the Jewish people understood that David was a king and now the angel Gabriel is saying that Jesus will be given the throne of his father David. This means that Jesus will be king just like David. The first century Jewish world, even the first century church understood this to mean the long awaited Messiah. Jesus will be king who will save the world from the power of sin. And his kingdom will not have any end. This was the birth of the king of the universe, Jesus was not just the king of the Jews, but will be king of everyone in this world. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."—John 3:16. Those who believe in Jesus will be granted access to His kingdom where there is everlasting life. King Jesus laid down His life for me and you, so that we may not perish under the power of sin, but rather have eternal life. Unlike the kings of this world, Jesus came down to us, to live among us so he can experience our temptations and struggles, what it means to be human. And so to ultimately give his life as a ransom in exchange for our salvation. And unlike David who lay asleep, Jesus kingdom will never end, Jesus was killed and he rose again from the dead. Jesus would demonstrate our victor over the power of sin through his resurrection from the dead. Through Jesus we will also have peace with God, since it is Jesus who took our place on the cross.

How then did Mary respond to these wonderful news, let us look at verse 34-35, "How can this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" 35The angel replied, "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." Mary's question was not out of unbelief, but rather she believed the angel but could not understand how she could give birth or fall pregnant while she is a virgin. The angel was also kind enough to explain how it could be possible for her to fall pregnant. The Holy Spirit would come upon Mary and the power of God would overshadow her. This is the reason Jesus is born the Son of God, it is because he was born of the Holy Spirit. Two things are revealed here, the virgin birth of Jesus would be the work of the Holy Spirit and the work of the most High God. This means that Joseph would not be the biological father but rather the legal father. In fact the Bible refers to him as the guardian of the baby Jesus. Secondly, the child to be born will be holy and will not share the sinful human nature of man. We are born sinners because we are the seed of Adam, and thus by nature are born under the power of sin. However, Jesus will be born because of the work of the Holy Spirit and almighty God, he is of the seed of the Holy Spirit and not that of Adam. **Jesus will be born of the Holy Spirit, thus he will be holy and great.**

The angel's explanation of how Jesus will be born or come about was not easy for Mary to understand. Then the angel of God explained and encouraged Mary, look at verse 36, "Look, even Elizabeth your relative has conceived a son in her old age, and she who was called barren is in her sixth month. **37For no word from God will ever fail.**" Mary knew Elizabeth very well, she knew about Elizabeth's struggle to have children of her own. Mary also understood that Elizabeth was in her old age, where it was not possible for her to have a child because the bible said, they were not just old, but very old. Hearing about Elizabeth's pregnancy could only affirm and convict Mary of the word of God, that indeed the word of God will not fail, but that God will accomplish what He promised her. God accomplishes his purposes through the power of his spoken word.

What Mary was being told and coming to understand would disturb Mary's life plans completely. If anything it probably felt as though her personal life was being attacked and taken away from her before her very eyes. Mary was engaged to be Married to Joseph, her mind and energy was all invested in her marriage ceremony and her life with Joseph. She had dreams of how her life will look like after marriage with Joseph. However, the Lord had a different plan and purpose for Mary. While a virgin, she will conceive and give birth to a son. Same time the angel said Mary was highly favoured and that God was with her. Yet her plans and dreams are about to be drastically taken away and it is because of having found favour in the Lord, it is in spite of being favoured by God. Contrary to popular believe, that when God's favour is upon you things will go your way, well things were not going Mary's

way. Her life plans and dreams were about to be thrown out of the window. Moreover, being pregnant outside marriage was like a death sentence in her life. Especially in those days under religious laws, she stood the risk of being stoned to death. She would be shamed and possibly disowned by her own people. Let alone the fact that even Joseph would possibly leave her. Her dream to be married would never be realized. What the angel was requesting of Mary was not a small matter, for Mary it was a life and death situation. In fact Mary would be taking on a form of a sinful person being impregnated outside marriage so that she does the will of God. How then did Mary respond given all these issues in her life? and the implications of what she is being asked to do, let us look at verse 38 for Mary's response, **"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it happen to me according to your word."** Then the angel left her." At the very critical time of Mary's life, Mary surrendered herself to the will of God. Mary said, "I am the Lord's servant, may it happen to me according to your word." This shows that Mary accepted this task by faith and not out of emotions or feelings. Mary chose to submit to God's will rather than fight it away in order to fulfil and achieve the plans of her life. Instead she fought against the strong desire to retain her life and dreams by faith. This was the effect of Jesus greatness and the way Mary could experience the greatness of Jesus personally. Had Mary rejected to submit to God's will or direction, Mary could not have participated in this great work of God for world salvation. The words from the angel would have just become head knowledge. Mary could say, I am the Lord's servant because by faith she could see the greatness of Jesus or put another way, she was already moved by the greatness of Jesus our Messiah. Remembering that, Mary was accepting this while she was a virgin which was strong reason to reject, but because of the power of the word of God, because of the greatness and Kingship of Jesus, Mary could surrender everything so that she can completely be used to bring Jesus into this world.

In conclusion, the person of Jesus in our lives makes all the difference. Who is Jesus to you and me, is he great? Is he the Son of the most High God? Have we accepted him as king of our lives? Because his kingdom will last forever. Or is Jesus some person with high moral values. I read a quote by Tozer, that reads, "What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us." I am still thinking about it, and through this passage I can see that, what Mary thought about Jesus, became the most important thing in her life. Mary saw Jesus as her saviour king, the promised Messiah who would deliver many from the power of sin. This was bigger than her life dreams and life plans, serving Jesus was then worth losing everything even her marriage to Joseph including her own life. Mary who was still a virgin, all of a sudden accepted the call of God to be a servant of God. She accepted to serve king Jesus and participate in the great redemptive work of God for world salvation. I pray that God may help us to also see who this Jesus is personally, for he is the Son of the Most High God, born of the Holy Spirit and his kingdom will last forever. We have no one else to save us from the power of sin and death but Jesus. The power of sin and death causes us to focus on things that do not matter in eternity, in arguments, fights and separation instead of unity, forgiveness and love. The power of sin and death makes us feel our lives are meaningless and worthless. Just this week there was a suicide in Santon City and just today we received news of a QS student who committed suicide at Solomon Mahlangu House (Formerly known as senate house). Jesus is our saviour God through whom we can have living hope into his kingdom. I pray that we may experience Jesus our saviour king newly and respond appropriately as Mary did, by surrendering our lives and will into God's hands. Here lies the true meaning to living. Choosing to be a tool for the work of God rather than being a tool for the work of Satan. May God help us to daily experience the person of Jesus, His power and grace for Jesus is the only hope for this world.