

JESUS THE SON OF GOD OUR LORD

An exposition of Luke 1:26-38
at West Hills Evergreen on December 10, 2017

INTRODUCTION: Pray for Colleen, people lay hands...Being at Bethlehem on Friday night...staring at a cheesy reenactment of the virgin birth...surrounded by hundreds of people...we begin singing silent night...none of us known each other...there are people here from all over the world...and without any relation to one another, other than the desire to come and see a staged reproduction of the birth of Jesus...we unite our voices in worship and sing praises to the King of kings. This isn't a new story. We all know what happened. So why do we still go?

PROBLEM: Why do we celebrate Christmas? I don't mean you personally...I mean we human beings on planet earth. What happened 2000 years ago that caused the churches in Rome and eventually the vast majority of Europe, then the Americas, and then basically the world to begin celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ? Well the one who was born in the manger was Christ the Lord. Okay...so? Well that's really cool and unique. Yeah so? Cool unique stuff happens all the time? Why did the celebrations continue? **Seriously think for a minute...how is it that for thousands of years...**the great thinkers, musicians, artists, composers and poets have gazed with wonder at the nativity...and it has continued to inspire new, imaginative, and beautiful creations in response. For a millennia we have oriented the division of time around this event. WHY? It's not just that Christ was born...it's that Christ's birth here means something...**for me and you and for all people** who will come and bow to the One who was born a child and yet a king...His birth signals the dawn of a new age in the earth...the beginning of new possibilities for all God's creatures...it means things in your life don't have to continue as they are...it means the old has past and the new has come...

MAIN POINT: the Son of God was born to offer eternal life to the world, so seek life in Him!

SETTING THE CONTEXT: To prepare for our reading from Luke 1 this morning, I feel it is important to establish the larger historical context of Christ's birth. In the bible there are high context events and low context events. With low context events, you don't really need to understand much about the context of the situation to understand what's going on. In Genesis 1, it says "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." You can understand that statement apart from almost any context.

The birth of Christ however, is an extremely HIGH context event. In other words, it's difficult to understand the significance of almost any part of it apart from the greater context in which the event occurred. For instance last week, we looked at how the star over Bethlehem, the coming of the Magi, and giving someone the title of Christ all had a significant Old Testament context. And when these things all came together in the birth of the infant Jesus the result was worship and the beginning of redemption for all of life. Today, we are going to look at what it means to be called the Son of God, and how that relates to the throne promised to David 1000

years prior to the Advent of Jesus. So I would like to quickly summarize and read a brief excerpt from 2 Samuel 7, to give you some context for what we are going to find in Luke 1:26-38.

In the generation following the Exodus, the people of Israel were brought into the land of Canaan and established there by the Lord our God. He gave them rest on every side as He ruled in their midst and provided for them richly as they walked in obedience to the covenant He made with them on Sinai. But eventually the people turned away from him in their hearts and did what was right in their own eyes. And so God would discipline them and they would repent. And after repenting they would turn away again...and this cycle of rebellion, discipline, repentance went on and on for centuries. Eventually the people demanded a king so that they could be like all the other nations in the ancient near east. And far from being a morally neutral request...the authors of our Old Testament tell us that this was a rejection of the Invisible God as their King, and a desire for a visible one instead. But God in His mercy grants their request and they are given a King.

The first one, a great, tall and handsome man named Saul is anointed to rule, but he eventually turns away from God in his heart and the kingdom is taken from him. And to everyone's surprise, God turns and gives it to a shepherd boy from the tiny town of Bethlehem, who is the youngest of his brothers, and least among his tribe. This boy had nothing going for him from the perspective of man...nothing to commend him as a king...but God saw something that the eyes of flesh could not see...this boy...would grow up to be a man after God's own heart...this boy would grow up to be King David...the One who would for the first time since the days of Joshua son of Nun, unite all of Israel under a single King...and He would rule to please God and not Himself.

As David's reign came to the height of its glory, God sent a prophet to him with a message saying in 2 Samuel 7:8 "I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep that you should be prince over my people Israel. And I have been with you wherever you went and have cut off all your enemies from before you." He then moves to promise David five things. In verse 9 he promises **FIRST**...I will make your name great, like the name of the great ones of the earth. **SECOND** in verse 10, he promises I will establish my people Israel in their own place and give them rest from all their enemies forever. **THIRD** I will raise up your offspring after you and I will establish the throne of His kingdom forever. He doesn't say I will establish Him forever... but rather His throne...namely his lineage of Kings who will reign over the people. **FOURTH** he says in verse 14, "I will be a Father to him and he will be a son to me. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men." The Kings born of the house of David will be like sons to God and He will treat them as though he were there Father. And finally **FIFTH**: v. 15-16 "my steadfast love shall never depart from him as I took it from Saul. Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever."

So God promises, 1) I will make David's name great, 2.) I will give my people a place and grant them rest, 3.) I will raise up your seed and grant him a throne forever. 4.) I will be a father to Him and He will be a Son to Me, 5.) My steadfast love will never depart from your line and that is how your throne will endure forever. But time marches on. David's sons eventually begin to rebel against the Lord. The Lord chastises, and they repent. Another cycle of rebellion, discipline, repentance...on and on until finally the reign of David's line is broken by God

through the invasion and deportation of Nebachanezer and the people are carried away into exile. 70 years later...when the people are finally allowed to come home...the people begin to ask... what has become of God's promise? What has become of the throne of David and the faithfulness of our God? And the people waited for 400 years...they had no words from prophets...no messages from angels...no peace in the land as they came under the rule of one invading force after another. But in the bleak cold winter of waiting...in the middle of nowhere...to a humbled child whom no one would have expected...God suddenly answered:

READING: Luke 1:26–38 In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. 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, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?" 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 will be called holy—the Son of God. 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. For nothing will be impossible with God." And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

PRAYER: Lord we are teeny tiny people with teeny tiny lives...with teeny tiny problems that become dwarfed in the presence of the reality of your steadfast love and faithfulness. You know my frame Lord, you know that I am but dust. And even though my existence is but a breath in your GRAND PURPOSE OF REDEMPTION I pray that you would grant me strength and power to proclaim this eternal gospel in a way that can be understood. Speak through a mortal Lord God. Speak and lift our eyes from ourselves and our circumstances...to behold you in the glory of Your humiliation...to see you in the power of your weakness...to submit to you in your submission to the steadfast love of God...that all of us may be changed forever. Speak to us Lord

ROAD MAP: 1.) How the son of God appeared, 2.) Why the Son of God appeared, 3.) Who it is that appeared as the Son of God, 4.) What this appearance means for us

HOW THE SON OF GOD APPEARED

1. So let's begin by looking at the question of HOW the Son of God appeared. Verse 26 opens by saying "in the sixth month the angel..." And of course we ask...the sixth month in relation to what? And the answer is, the sixth month in relation to a different pregnancy that was announced earlier in this chapter to a priest named Zechariah back in Luke 1:13. Zechariah was old, his wife was old beyond child-bearing years, but they were going to have a child named John who would prepare the way of the Lord. Now we went through this story

as a church a long time ago. I wonder if anyone can guess how long ago it was that we preached on Luke 1? We started the gospel of Luke on Jan 12, 2014...almost 4 year ago.

2. In any case, what I want you to see is that Luke opens the story of Mary by setting it in relationship to the story that has just come before. These are not independent events they are related events.
 1. We know that Luke is referring to the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy because the angel reiterates in verse 36 that the sign Mary will have to know that his prophecy is true is that "your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren."
 2. In other words...her impossible pregnancy is going to be a sign to you of the certainty of your impossible pregnancy. But there is something more going on. Luke doesn't just seem to want to relate these two events. He wants the reader to compare them. The first chapter of Luke is not simply the telling of two related stories, it is a deliberate portrait of contrasts. It is a contrast between the announcement, Advent and subsequent ministry of John the Baptist vs. the announcement, advent and subsequent ministry of Jesus who is called the Christ. Let me show you what I mean.
3. The first thing we see is that the same angel that was sent to John in verse 19 was sent to Mary in verse 26. And whatever we might say about the dignity of the messenger (after all Gabriel was the same angel who brought messages of prophecy to Daniel in Babylon half a millennia before), in this context Luke seems to think that the most significant thing about His coming is that He has come from God. Gabriel was sent by God verse 26, I am Gabriel and I stand in the presence of God verse 19.
 1. That says two things, first, whatever contrast we are about to see in this chapter comes from God. God is the author of this story and his grace is the fountain which fills the story with life. He is unfolding the story in a way that is meant to show you the glory of His love and grace. And second...and perhaps more significant...is that the joy that is coming into the world by the birth of these two children has come from God. God is at the center of all the joy of Christmas. Christmas is about God. But now the contrasts...
4. Gabriel appeared to Zechariah in the city of Jerusalem, in the temple, as he ministered in the holy of holies. Gabriel appeared to Zechariah to announce the birth of John the baptist while a multitude stood outside praying. The great prophet of the most high was announced to Israel in exactly the way you would expect. At the absolute center of the people's religious life.
 1. On the other hand...verse 26, when announcing the birth of Christ, the angel was sent to a city of Galilee...Nazareth...nowheresville. Luke has to designate the region where Nazareth was located because it isn't likely that the readers would have any idea where a little podunk town like Nazareth would be.
 2. This would be like me saying to people who lived in San Fransisco, an angel appeared to a man that lived above Union Square as he was working at the city capital building...to announce a great event...than that same angel went to an unincorporated township outside of Gilroy to a girl who worked at a tiny corner store to announce a greater event.
5. The angel was sent from Nazareth to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph of the house of David. So in the universe that Israel existed in at the time...there was a

profound social difference between a great priest who ministered in the Holy of Holies and an unmarried little girl.

1. In other words, from the eyes of the flesh you would expect a great prophetic announcement to a righteous priest who bears the honor of old age and grey hairs...and has been chosen by God by lot to serve in the most holy place. But there is nothing about an unmarried young woman from nowhere to commend her in the sight of man...to become the mother of a King. And yet here it is...
6. It says she is betrothed but she's not even married yet. But Luke begins to tilt his hand to show us how this child will become a Son of David. She is going to be married to a man named Joseph, who is from the lineage of David.
7. The wife of Zechariah is named Elizabeth which means the Lord has sworn, or my God's oath...her very name is meant to recall the faithfulness of God. Where as the virgin's name is Miriam (in Greek did you know that?) which means rebellion...the last thing you would think of when anticipating how God would reveal the promised Son to Israel.
 1. Now I don't want to make too much of the name thing but I think it's simply important to observe that for Luke...none of this information is incidental...and nothing about this situation is arbitrary or coincidence.
8. This is a deliberate portrait of contrasts. The one who will come to prepare the way of the Lord will come in the context of greatness, notoriety and honor...the One who will come as the Lord who's way the first child will prepare...is coming in obscurity...in humility. He will have no form or majesty that you should look upon him says Isaiah 53. The King of all kings is not just humbling himself by becoming human, he is not only humiliating himself from a cosmic perspective...God taking on the flesh of creation...his coming is going to be a humiliation even on the basis of human standards.
9. The Son of God will appear as a nothing from nowhere. His beauty, majesty and glory will not come from man or the status that man assigns on the basis of origin, on the basis of appearance, on the basis of status. His beauty, majesty and glory will be established by God in direct contradiction to the natural inclination of human values. And his coming is meant to remind you of someone. It's meant to remind you of David. And yet someone greater than David is here.

HOW DID THE SON OF GOD APPEAR? He appeared as nothing from nowhere. He didn't just condescend from the eyes of heaven...taking on the form of a man and becoming a servant of men...he even condescended from the eyes of earth...as Luke makes clear by contrasting his arrival with the arrival of John the Baptist. That is how the son of God appears...let's now look at WHY the son of God appears.

WHY THE SON OF GOD APPEARED

1. In verse 28 it says the angel appeared and said Greetings O' favored one, the Lord is with you. And it says Mary was greatly troubled by this greeting as she tried to discern what the angel meant.
 1. For all the reasons I just gave above...when an angel appears to Mary and says you are favored by the Lord...this statement makes literally zero sense. How can no one from no

where, not even married with nothing be favored by God? Since when does blessing work that way.

2. And Mary, not knowing what the angel meant by this became afraid. She has been told you are a special object of grace...and that the Lord is with her...why would that make her afraid? This text doesn't specifically say but let me give you an educated guess. For anyone who knows the Old Testament as Mary obviously does based on her song in Luke 1:46-55...**when God shows up in the midst of his people...crazy stuff happens.**
3. **Things change.** When God shows up he tends to severely disrupt the status quo...and He does it in grace and He does it for His glory...but let's be honest...if you live in a small town far away from the bustling life of the city...how much change are you used to having to cope with in life? If I told you God is coming in grace tomorrow and He is going to seriously disrupt your life for His glory...how would that make you feel?
2. But look at the Angel's response to Mary's fear...I love this verse 30 "Don't be afraid Mary...he literally calls her by her name. Mary...precious child...beloved daughter... Mary...everything is about to go crazy in your life...but you don't have to be afraid. WHY? Because you have found favor with God.
 1. How many of you fear the change God is authoring in your life right now? This angel from God is saying something very important to you...For those whom God favors... there is no need for fear. For those upon whom God has set his steadfast love...you are safer in the eye of a hurricane than the person who is in rebellion against God while locked up in an iron castle. Freedom from fear is found in the favor of God...not in castles made by human hands.
 2. How do we become favored by God? Not by earning our way into his good graces. Not by being good enough...not by being better than some other person...all attempts to earn God's favor fall flat on their face...there is only one way into this favor...it is by putting all of your faith in the Son of God...Jesus Christ trusting Him to die for the forgiveness of your sins...to rise to raise you up to life...to reign over you to lead you in the way of holiness and the way of peace...
 3. Put your faith in Christ's reign over your circumstances and you will be free from fear... because those who trust in Christ are favored by the Lord. So big change is coming Mary...you don't have to be afraid...but what is going to happen?
3. Verse 31 behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son and you shall call his name Jesus. Then what...then the Angel begins to announce that this child whom she will conceive will fulfill all that was promised that God made to David concerning a Son who would reign on the throne.
 1. Verse 32 He will be called great, as promised to David
 2. He will be called the Son of the Most High, the Most High being God...recalling I will be a father to Him and He will be a son to me.
 3. God will give to him the throne of His father David...He will be a King in David's line who will once again reign on David's throne
 4. verse 33 He will reign over the house of Jacob forever...the steadfast love will never depart from the line...
 5. His Kingdom will have no end...He will establish the people in peace forever...

6. In other words...this announcement is saying everything that was promised to David a thousand years ago...everything the people have been waiting for...everything our fathers and grandfathers spoke to us as they waited in the long winter of God's silence is about to arrive in the birth of this holy child.
7. Why is the Son of God about to appear? Because of the steadfast love and faithfulness of God to His people. The Son of God is about to appear because when God says He is going to do something He does it...because not a single Word of the Lord will come back void but it will accomplish all that the Lord has purposed for it...as sure as the rain brings forth vegetation from the land. As sure the rising sun will give light and warmth to the earth...so will God's glorious love and faithfulness be known among the nations. You will conceive Mary...and bear a king. Don't be afraid Mary...all of God's covenant promises are going to be fulfilled by the child whom you will conceive.
4. But it's important to now stop and appreciate that God is announcing something greater than the coming of a King to renew the line of David. He is announcing the coming of a King who is greater than David. He is announcing the coming of a king who will do what David and David's sons could not do.
 1. IN 2 Samuel 7...God promised that David's throne would remain forever and ever. The office of King would be held by a son of David into eternity. That was never going to change. But if a son was unrighteous they could be displaced. If the faithfulness of the sons failed...the line could fall, even if God's faithfulness didn't falter. The throne would remain...but a better son was required.
 2. And in verse 33 we see something very significant. The angel from God says that the one who will fill Mary's womb is not going to reign from David's forever throne...it says the one who will fill Mary's womb will reign from David's throne FOREVER. HE WILL REIGN OVER THE HOUSE OF JACOB FOREVER...HIS KINGDOM WILL NEVER END. The King to fill Mary's womb will not reign until He falters and then be removed...this King will reign for eternity.
 3. And it isn't until you have a great King who reigns forever, that the kingdom can finally continue without end. This one coming into your womb will be the eternal king of an eternal kingdom...fear not Mary...fear not God's people...for the Lord is with you.
 4. His reign will not only fulfill the promises (v. 54-55)...but His reign will bring salvation and the forgiveness of sins. In response to the events God's people begin to sing. In verses 68-69, Mary recognizes that this child in her womb means salvation for Israel and she praises God as Her Savior. and forgiveness of sins from the tender mercies of God (v. 76-77). In Luke 1:67-79, Zechariah praises God for His son John the Baptist and prophesies the way in which he will prepare the way for Jesus God's Messiah.
 5. He sings in verse 76 "You child will be called the prophet of the Most High (not the son but the prophet), for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways...how? Verse 77 to give knowledge of salvation to his people in the forgiveness of their sins...WHY WILL THIS HAPPEN? verse 78 because of the tender mercy of our God...to give light those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death...to guid our feet into the way of peace.
5. Friends...Jesus' coming as the great King...Jesus coming to fulfill God's promises and to do even more that what the grace of God had previous foretold...all of this is for salvation and

the forgiveness of sins...this is about being brought of darkness and the shadow of death... this is about things not having to continue as they were before...but an invitation to come out and be guided into the way of peace...and Christ's coming isn't at the center of it a harsh rebuke for your sins...to come to Christ we must recognize we have sinned...we must confess our sins and we must turn from them toward God for healing...but Christ's coming is first and foremost an expression of the tender mercy of our God.

1. Christ didn't come into the world to condemn you but to save you. He didn't come into the world to bring judgement but to bring peace and reconciliation...between God and man. His coming is an expression of the tender, loving mercy of God toward the weak and the helpless...to those who are poor in spirit and longing for freedom from their sins...longing for new life that offers more than simply winding the clock of this earthly existence with the looming shadow of death.
2. Why did the Son of God come into the world? John 3:16 tells us it was because of God's love. God saw the brokenness of our world...God sees the brokenness of each of your hearts...each of your sins...all of your lives...all of your minds are opened and laid bare before him and seeing it...the Holy One of Israel, the LORD Almighty, was moved by His gracious compassion, from the overflow of His heart came an eternal fountain of Holy love.
3. And that fountain did not flood the world with the sentimental ideas of greeting cards... that fountain did not overflow with the feelings you get from your favorite holiday baked goods...that fountain flowed with the glory of heaven...from the fountain of God's love came the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ.
6. Why did the Son of God appear, because of God's faithfulness and steadfast love. But who was this son of God? And what does His appearing mean for you and I everyone?

WHO APPEARED AS THE SON OF GOD

1. There is a further contrast between the son that will be born to Elizabeth, wife of Zecharia and the Son born of Mary, the betrothed to Joseph. And that contrast is this: In the case of Zecharia...God will reiterate the great covenant miracle of Israel, Abram and Sarai could not have children, but God promised a covenant heir to the father of the people of God. He promised to bring life from barrenness. And for Elizabeth, that miracle of all miracles is about to happen again.
2. In the case of Mary however, God will do something very very different. Something He has not done since the dawn of time...
3. Mary asks the angel in verse 34 how can this be since I am a virgin? Sure we have heard of barren women becoming pregnant by the power of God...but who has ever heard of a person giving birth who has never known a man? We can comprehend life from barrenness...who has heard a child born to a virgin?
4. The angel replies The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; the child to be born will be called holy the son of God.
 1. The Holy Spirit coming upon you is reminiscent of Genesis 1 where the Holy Spirit is depicted as hovering over face of the deep. The power of the Most High overshadowing you recalls the presence of God in power with His people...specifically it recalls the

Presence of the Lord overshadowing the mercy seat of the ark within the temple of God. Both images recall the profound creative and redeeming power of the Almighty. The images together recall numerous old testament events of creation and redemption... recreation and reconstitution. These images together are saying...God is going to do something profoundly new and God-glorifying.

2. And verse 35 says I will create new life in your womb apart from all other means...I am not forming new life in the midst barrenness, Mary... in the birth of this child I am forming new life from nothingness.
5. who in Israel has heard of such a thing...since the beginning? This is like saying:
 1. I'm going to cause light with no sun
 2. I'm going to produce oceans with no water
 3. I'm going to form galaxies without stars
 4. I'm going to create life apart from marital love
6. This new life is meant to bring new life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son WHY so that whoever believes in Him would not perish but have eternal life. So that those who sit in the shadow of death would begin to taste of life from God.

This is why men and women and children...strangers to one another but eternal family in the Lord...will travel from all over the city to hear the story they've heard a thousand times before... because the Son of God appeared to bring eternal life, born to set his people free, to release us from fear and sin, to draw us out of the toil of a cursed life into the rest of a blessed one. Heavenly hosts sing hallelujah, Christ the Savior is born, Christ the savior is born...

WHAT THIS APPEARING MEANS FOR US

1. **You can receive the tender-mercies of God in Christ:** God has come in the most unassuming, humble way possible, and calls us to draw near with humility and contrition to receive grace and acceptance from God.
2. **Your life doesn't have to continue the way it's been...**the Christ came into the world to bring new life, to bring people into life with God to raise us up from death into eternal life. The one who is going to form Christ in Mary's womb, promises to form the life and power and character of Christ in God's people by the power of the Holy Spirit...He want's to guide our feet into the paths of peace.
3. **You don't have to be afraid...**this gospel had implications for Mary's marriage, her reputation, her family...but she trusted God with all things.
 1. She trusted God to be her Savior (v. 47), not just with ultimate things, but even with the concrete stuff of life in the here and now...
 2. And the result generations have called her blessed (v. 48)
4. **Imitate the Son of God:** Behold the love of your King, becoming weak and lowly to identify with the weak and lowly...and go and do likewise. Not with drive-by charity. I'm talking about sitting down next to the person that no one else wants to talk to at your family gatherings and talking with them.

COMMUNION: Fence the table