

# Luke

*The Throne of David*  
(Luke 1:26-33)

*With Study Questions*

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Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, <sup>27</sup> to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name *was* Mary. <sup>28</sup> And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored *one*, the Lord *is* with you; blessed *are* you among women!" <sup>29</sup> But when she saw *him*, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. <sup>30</sup> Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup> And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. <sup>32</sup> He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. <sup>33</sup> And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end (Luke 1:26-33).

## **A History of Promise**

The Bible is made up of two major sections. We generally call these two sections the Old Testament (Genesis through Malachi) and the New Testament (Matthew through Revelation). The Old is prior to the birth of Jesus. The New begins with the birth of Jesus. Augustine is often cited as the source of how these two testaments work together.

**The Old Testament is the New Testament concealed; the New Testament is the Old Testament revealed.**

The heart of Augustine's words revolve around Christ. According to Jesus Himself, the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament are about Him.

**You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me (John 5:39).**

Both testaments contain the same message. Yet the Old Testament books were written before Jesus was born. So, the testimony of Jesus found in those books is presented prophetically, allegorically, through narratives (the stories), sometimes poetically (as in Psalms and Proverbs), through types (like a lamb), foreshadows (like priests), sacraments/sacrifices, etc.

The message of Jesus goes all the way back to the dawn of man. Directly after the fall we see this wonderful promise of deliverance, that which has been called The Proto-Evangelium (protos meaning "first" and evangelion meaning "good news" or "gospel"). That which we're reading about in this passage was first declared in Genesis to the serpent:

**And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel (Genesis 3:15).**

Notice though how this deliverance, or restoration, is not a smooth ride. Two parties are getting bruised. The seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. In a broad sense, it can be said that this is a general battle between good and evil that has existed throughout history.

But in a more individual sense, the two parties in this prophecy are Satan and Jesus. They are both, in a sense, fathers<sup>1</sup>. The devil is the “**father of lies**” (John 8:44) and Jesus is the “**Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace**” (Isaiah 9:6). And even though there are bruises, or casualties, on both sides, the prophecy clearly has good (or Christ) victorious over evil (or Satan). One bruise is to the heel. The other to the head.

It would be through the death of Christ (a strike to His heel), that we would see the death of the devil (a strike to his head). This prophecy in Genesis 3, as well as all the other prophecies pointing to Christ, would require a sacrifice, a death. And since it is impossible for God to die, He would, in His great love for us, prepare a body for His Son (Hebrews 10:5), to accomplish the task of redemption.

**Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil (Hebrews 2:14).**

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<sup>1</sup> This is not to confuse the distinction between Father and Son in the Trinity.

In the same way David struck Goliath with his own sword, the devil would be defeated with his own death. All this to say that what we're reading of in this early portion of Luke is the beginning of God keeping His promise to fix through Christ, as it were, that which was broken through Adam. But this would not happen without a lot of bruising.

**Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth,<sup>27</sup> to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary.<sup>28</sup> And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!"**

## Mary

Luke now introduces us to a virgin named Mary. The significance of her virginity will be addressed in the next message (verses 34, 35). For now, let us appreciate the humble means by which God restores this broken world.

Gabriel is sent to an unimpressive city, Nazareth, to (at least by worldly, observable standards, an unimpressive young lady. It should not be regarded as false humility when Mary speaks of her own **"lowly state" (Luke 1:48)**. It is true that this young, soon to be, family was of the **"house of David,"** but the royalty of that family had lost its luster in light of being under the oppression of Rome.

It might be compared to those of us who've gone to geneology.com to find we're related to some former dignitary or famous explorer. The value of such ancestry is limited to a conversation in a dinner party.

I don't doubt that Mary was a fine young woman. What we will soon read in what has been called the *Magnificat*, reveals a virtuous and well-catechized youth (likely a teen). At the same time, we should resist placing her in a category that would likely cause her to recoil.

Since this is our introduction to Mary, we might be tempted to enter a full-scale study on Mariology and the errors produced by the church (mainly Roman Catholic) regarding this woman. For now, we will exercise some restraint and simply point out that there is no hint in Scripture of the *immaculate conception* of Mary (that she was conceived free from the effects

of original sin). In fact, she will refer to her “Savior” (Luke 1:47). If one has no sin, one doesn’t need a savior.

Nor will you find in Scripture *the bodily assumption of Mary*. The idea presented that in her death (if in fact she died) her body underwent no decay but was assumed directly to heaven. Neither will one find the *coronation of Mary as the queen of heaven*. By this is meant that Jesus took Mary to heaven for a coronation where she is queen and the mother of all the children of God, given the fulness of royal power. A person to whom we are to pray as queen mother.

And finally, it requires quite the contortion of Scripture to conclude that Mary is the *mediatrix of all graces*. It is argued that when she, later in this chapter said, “**Let it be according to your word**” (Luke 1:38) to the angel, she became the “New Eve.” Her cooperation in the incarnation and redemption of mankind, it is said, warrants her being viewed as the “Mother of all living” and a type of partner in our redemption.

It is enough to say that many of the doctrines which elevate Mary far beyond what the Bible declares are fairly modern doctrines the Roman Catholic Church has declared in the last 150-200 years.

That Mary is called to “**rejoice**” as a “**highly favored one**” who is “**blessed among women**” should not springboard us into viewing her as superhuman. These blessings are not founded upon her superiority over other women, but on the good pleasure of God. God bestows His blessings upon whom He will. And here it is bestowed upon Mary.

Similar to the “**righteous**” who are confused about their good favor with God in connection with their feeding and visiting of Jesus (Matthew 25:37-39), Mary seems perplexed, as Matthew Henry said, “not conscious to herself of anything that either *merited* or *promised* such great things.”<sup>2</sup> It is notable that those who have found favor in God’s eyes are not generally aware of it and certainly don’t think they deserve it.

**But when she saw *him*, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was.<sup>30</sup> Then the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God (Luke 1:29, 30).**

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<sup>2</sup> Henry, M. (1994). *Matthew Henry’s commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume* (p. 1823). Peabody: Hendrickson.

## **Favor With God**

And it might be pointed out here, that Mary, though she had found favor with God, is in for a rough ride. Those two often go together. Simeon will soon inform her that her soul will be pierced (Luke 2:35) when it comes to the events and ministry of her child. The strength that Mary will find in the difficulties before her come from the knowledge that she has found favor from above, not from abroad. Mary was unlike many of her contemporaries.

**...for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God (John 12:43).**

**And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. <sup>32</sup> He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. <sup>33</sup> And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end (Luke 1:31-33).**

## **A Unique Greatness**

We are now introduced to the central figure of all Scripture-the central figure of all that is, both in history and eternity-the Son, who shall be named Jesus. In Jewish culture, it was the father who would name the child. Jesus, whose name means Jehovah saves, will be named by His Father in heaven.

All the spotlights and crosshairs in the course of history and eternity are now turned toward Christ. The cameras do not zoom in on Mary or John the Baptist or anyone else. Those who would seek to take rank with Christ or were forced by others into that frame either: 1. declare their own unworthiness, as with John the Baptist. Jesus declared John to be finest person born of a woman, yet he viewed himself as unworthy to loose the sandal strap of Jesus (Luke 3:16). Or, 2. Are providential cast into the sidelines, as when the apostles scattered when the shepherd was struck (Matthew 26:31).

Whatever Gabriel means here by “**great**” it cannot be compared to any sort of greatness observed or achieved by the creature or creation. I always find it off-putting when the face of a man or a woman is placed in the town square as the Hope of its citizens. I think it can easily be argued that the welfare of any nation, family or church is best built upon the words that will later be uttered by John the Baptist.

**He must increase, but I *must* decrease (John 3:30).**

So much is said in these three verses regarding the ministry of Christ that we must distill for the sake of time.

First, His very name (which means Jehovah saves), is at the heart of this volcano of renewal. In a very broad sense, it is said that Jesus was sent by the Father to save the world. That speaks to the cosmic effects of His ultimate victory—a changed world. But big things, like a changed world, are the result of many, many little things.

So, each of us must ask, has He saved me? Do I believe? Or am I resisting the knowledge that I’m a sinner and Jesus is the answer to my dilemma. To resist that is to render the entire work of redemption, all of Scripture, a mere curiosity which will transition into an eternal tragedy.

Second, He will be “**called Son of the Highest.**” But aren’t we all sons and daughters of the Highest? Certainly not in the same sense. We are sons and daughters by adoption (Romans 8:15), but He is the “**only begotten of the Father**” (John 1:14). That term, which seems harmless on its face, becomes the epithet leading to the bruising.

**The Jews [talking to Pilate] answered him, “We have a law, and according to our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God” (John 19:7).**

Third, He is given the throne of David. This is a massive and much-repeated prophecy/promise we see in the Old Testament. Sadly, it is also a matter of some controversy. A thousand years before the events recorded in Luke, King David is given a promise:

**When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your**

**body, and I will establish his kingdom. <sup>13</sup> He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever (2 Samuel 7:12, 13).**

This promise is repeated over and over (Ps. 89:4, 29, 35–37; 132:11; Isa. 9:6, 7; 16:5; Jer. 23:5, 6). So, what is the throne of David and when does Jesus take it? The Second question first. The New Testament is not unclear.

**God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, <sup>31</sup> he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ (Acts 2:30, 31).**

The efforts made (primarily by a theological brand called Dispensationalism) to take this clear teaching of Scripture and deny its force is discouraging to say the least and destructive to say more. In order to make their system work, they create multiple thrones (the Father's throne versus Jesus' own throne, etc.).

I will resist at this point bringing forth all the passages in the New Testament declaring that Jesus is currently at His Father's...

**...right hand in the heavenly *places*, <sup>21</sup> far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. <sup>22</sup> And He put all *things* under His feet, and gave Him *to be* head over all *things* to the church, <sup>23</sup> which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all (Ephesians 1:20-23).**

Jesus is currently the King of kings and the Lord of lords (1 Timothy 6:15; Revelation 19:16). He currently has **"all authority...in heaven and on earth" (Matthew 28:18)**. This answers our second question. The "throne of type" becomes a type of absolute and ultimate authority.

The **"house of Jacob"** is a way of saying that the church, the Christian faith, was first established among the people of Israel, but then, As Calvin taught, would **"subdue the whole world."**



Let us appreciate the magnitude of this promise recited by Gabriel! If you, by faith, are part of this kingdom, you are part of a kingdom that will have no end. It will merely transition from militant to victorious-from history to eternity. Let us also appreciate that this great promise is made in the context of slavish and humble circumstances. As if God wanted to make a point that humanity had been reduced to a stump (Isaiah 11:1).

### **Conclusion**

It is difficult for me to know if the following excerpt from a sermon given on July 11, 1926, by a pastor named James Allen Francis has become worn out from use. Nonetheless, I think it beautifully expresses the transition from humble to superabundant. Writing of Jesus, he penned:

**He was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant. He grew up in another village, where he worked in a carpenter shop until he was 30. Then, for three years, he was an itinerant preacher.**

**He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never had a family or owned a home. He didn't go to college. He never lived in a big city. He never traveled 200 miles from the place where he was born. He did none of the things that usually accompany greatness. He had no credentials but himself.**

**He was only 33 when the tide of public opinion turned against him. His friends ran away. One of them denied him. He was turned over to his enemies and went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed to a cross between two thieves. While he was dying, his executioners gambled for his garments, the only property he had on earth. When he was dead, he was laid in a borrowed grave, through the pity of a friend.**

**Twenty centuries have come and gone, and today he is the central figure of the human race. I am well within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, all the navies that ever sailed, all the parliaments that ever sat, all**

**the kings that ever reigned--put together--have not affected the life of man on this earth as much as that one, solitary life.**

## Questions for Study

1. How would you compare the Old Testament to the New Testament? Is there a unified message in both (pages 2, 3).
2. When was the Gospel first proclaimed? Would that victory be won easily? Explain (pages 3, 4)?
3. What are some things that should, and should not, be believed about Mary (pages 4-6)?
4. What does the name Jesus mean? How has that affected you (pages 6, 7)?
5. How did people respond to Jesus being called the "Son of the Highest" (page 7)?
6. What is the throne of David? Is Jesus currently on it? Can you show that through Scripture (pages 7, 8)?