

Jesus' Birth Foretold

Luke 1:26-40
SS Lesson for 12/01/2013

Devotional Scripture: Isa 9:6-7

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Introduction

Overview and Approach to Lesson

The lesson reviews how **Jesus' Birth was Foretold**. The **study's aim** is to show that when God makes a promise, He can be counted on to keep it. The **study's application** is to encourage believers to live with a day-by-day trust in God's prophetic Word.

Key Verse: Luke 1:31

31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus.

Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

The angel said that Mary was highly favored (kecharitōmenē, a part. related to the noun charis, “grace”; the verb charitōō is used elsewhere in the NT only in Eph. 1:6). Also Mary had found favor (charis, “grace”) with God. Obviously God had bestowed a special honor on her. She was a special recipient of His grace. Gabriel’s admonition (Luke 1:30-31) was the same as to Zechariah: Do not be afraid, for you will have a Son (cf. v. 13). As with John (v. 13b), the naming was by the angel (v. 31).

The angel predicted five things about Mary’s Son.

1. He will be great.
2. He will be called the Son of the Most High (cf. v. 76). The Septuagint often used the term “Most High” (hypsistou) to translate the Hebrew ʿelyōn (cf. v. 76). Mary could not have missed the significance of that terminology. The fact that her Baby was to be called the “Son of the Most High” pointed to His equality with Yahweh. In Semitic thought a son was a “carbon copy” of his father, and the phrase “son of” was often used to refer to one who possessed his “father’s” qualities (e.g., the Heb. trans. “son of wickedness” in Ps. 89:22 [kjv] means a wicked person).
3. He will be given the throne of His father David. Jesus, as David’s descendant, will sit on David’s throne when He reigns in the Millennium (2 Sam. 7:16; Ps. 89:3-4, 28-29).
4. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever. Jesus’ reign over the nation Israel as her King will begin in the Millennium and continue on into the eternal state.
5. His kingdom will never end. These promises must have immediately reminded Mary of the promise of Yahweh to David (2 Sam. 7:13-16). David understood the prophecy as referring not only to his immediate son (Solomon) who would build the temple, but also to the future Son who would rule forever. David stated that Yahweh had spoken of the distant future (2 Sam. 7:19). Mary would have understood that the angel was speaking to her of the Messiah who had been promised for so long.

Mary did not seem surprised that the Messiah was to come. Rather, she was surprised that she would be His mother since she was a virgin (lit., “since I do not know a man”). But the angel did not rebuke Mary, as he had rebuked Zechariah (v. 20). This indicates that Mary did not doubt the angel’s words but merely wanted to know how such an event would be accomplished. The answer was that the Holy Spirit would creatively bring about the physical conception of Jesus (v. 35). This miraculous conception and Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ was necessary because of His deity and preexistence (cf. Isa. 7:14; 9:6; Gal. 4:4). Like Zechariah, Mary was given a sign: Elizabeth... is going to have a child. Mary affirmed her part in her Son’s subsequent birth by assenting to the plan of God: May it be to me as You have said. She willingly submitted to God’s plan, calling herself the Lord’s servant (doulē, “slave”; cf. Luke 1:48).

Commentary from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator

This key verse text was, of course, spoken by the Angel Gabriel to Mary, the mother of the Lord Jesus. It was spoken long before His birth. It was therefore a prophetic statement, a predictive prophecy, that foretold the sending of God's Son into the world. We should stand in awe of this text. In just a few words, we are reminded of God's awesome plan to send our Saviour into the world.

The angel made it clear in his prophetic words in this passage (Luke 1:31-33) that this sending would involve a wonderful and miraculous intervention. Mary would conceive a child while remaining a virgin. By His Spirit, God would miraculously work within her, and she would bring forth a child. The angel also made it clear that the right to name the child would belong to God. The angel told Mary the name the child was to be given. In Bible times, names were very important. Names often were imbued with meaning. For example, the patriarch Jacob in the Old Testament was given a Hebrew name that meant something like "he who grasps the heel" or "he who is a schemer." Hannah named her child Samuel, which means to be "heard by God." Samuel was born in response to Hannah's fervent prayers. So names had meaning. So it was with the Lord Jesus. As the prophecy was given of His coming into the world, the angelic messenger told of His specific and meaningful name. The name Jesus is equivalent to the Old Testament name Joshua, it is the same name—one not that uncommon among the Hebrew people. Sometimes the name is transliterated "Jeshua" instead of "Joshua," and the "j" is pronounced as a "y". Our Messianic friends prefer this for the name of the Lord. "Jesus" is the Greek equivalent for both variants. The name Jesus comes from a Hebrew word meaning "Yahweh saves." It speaks of God's salvation and our deliverance. So the name Jesus means "salvation," as Mary would certainly have recognized when the angel spoke this prophetic word to her. Matthew 1:21 makes this clear in another prophetic statement: "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins." As we study the Old Testament concept of salvation, we see that it refers to that deliverance that moves us from distress to safety through divine power. This is what the Lord Jesus has done for us. We realize that through the sending of this precious gift from heaven, we experience our salvation—not from all earthly dangers, but from eternal loss and the penalty of our sins. Any and all who hear and believe the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ are saved and given eternal life. People everywhere need to be rescued from their sins, and the One foretold so long ago is the One who can do it—as His name teaches us. Through this glorious prophetic word we see the miracle of the Lord's birth, His sovereign entry into the world, and the glorious purpose of it all—to save us from our sins.

Approach to the Major Outlines in Lesson

The outline of the lesson was adapted from a previous SS Lesson dated 12/09/2007 and from the points revealed by the study of the Scriptural text.

Verse	Phrase	Commentary
28	Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women	Birth Through a Chosen Vessel
31	And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus	Birth Through a Prepared Vessel
38	Then Mary said, Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word.	Birth Through a Willing Vessel

Lesson Introduction and Background

From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

The appearance of Gabriel to Mary in today's text takes us to the cusp of the watershed moment of biblical history. We can understand it better if we keep in mind some key elements of the Bible's story line. The angelic appearance occurred when Israel was under the rule of the Roman Empire. The Romans conquered Judea in 63 BC; about 20 years later, they consolidated their power further through King Herod the Great. He was a ruthless local ruler who cooperated with Rome. The Romans were skilled administrators, but their rule

over Israel was still oppressive. Most offensive of all, the Romans were pagans—worshippers of false gods. Roman rule meant that the injustice and moral evils of that empire were sustained by allegiance to false gods who represented that evil. The Roman Empire was not the first pagan kingdom to rule over Israel, of course. Before Rome, the Greeks held sway during a part of the period of time between the Old and New Testaments. Before the rise of Greece, Persia was the great power. Before the Persians there were the Babylonians, and before them the Assyrians. Israel's history of being dominated by pagan empires went back many centuries. Even so, the faithful of Israel clung to the ancient promise that God would not abandon his people. The God of all the nations of the earth had promised that he would restore his blessing to all the nations (Genesis 12:3; 18:18; 22:18). He had promised to Israel a king greater than David, a king whose throne would endure forever (2 Samuel 7:12, 13; Isaiah 9:6, 7; Jeremiah 23:5-8). Through generations, God's people held fast to their hope in God.

Marriage Customs - An awareness of Jewish marriage customs in the biblical period will help us understand today's text. Marriages typically were arranged by families, with the input and approval of the prospective couple. Because the economy of the time was simpler, people were given responsibilities at what seems a young age to us. Thus, young women could be married as young as 13 years of age. When a marriage was agreed to, the couple was considered legally bound, but they did not live together as husband and wife until the day of the marriage. On that day, the groom went to the bride's family's home, received his bride, and escorted her back to his family's home, where a feast of celebration was prepared. Prior to this wedding day, the groom and bride were forbidden to have sexual relations.

Major Theme Analysis

(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)

Birth Through a Chosen Vessel (Luke 1:26-29)

26 Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth,
27 to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary.
28 And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!"
29 But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was.

To be chosen (from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

The Divine communication becomes real and clear with the greeting to Mary. This is the heavenly greeting to the noble virgin who is to become the mother of the **Messiah**, Jesus. What is about to be offered is by the grace and favor of God. She is chosen in preference to all other women on earth at the time. It means something to be chosen. Do you not recall those times as children when the group you were a part of was going to play ball? The teacher appointed two to choose their teams. What a thrill it was if you were the first one to be chosen! But that thrill was by no means to be compared with the favor that God displays in choosing Mary. Nor does it compare with the blessing that we Christians have as the chosen people of God. Being “chosen” brings with it the important responsibility of personal response.

Being Chosen (26-27)

Christians are chosen to be a royal priesthood belonging to God (1 Peter 2:9)

9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

God chooses His people out of the world and now we belong to Him (John 15:19)

19 If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you.

God chooses His people as a people for Himself (Acts 15:14)

14 Simon has described to us how God at first showed his concern by taking from the Gentiles a people for himself.

Those God chooses, He also justified and will glorify (Rom 8:30)

30 And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

God chooses His people to be holy and blameless (Eph 1:4)

4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love

God chooses His people through His grace and for His purpose (2 Tim 1:9)

9 who has saved us and called us to a holy life-not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time,

God chooses His people through His foreknowledge and the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit (1 Peter 1:1-2)

To God's elect, strangers in the world, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, 2 who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood:

Definition of "Favored" (28)

From Wycliffe Bible Commentary

The word may be translated, full of grace, but it refers to one who is a recipient of favor rather than to the source of grace.

From Strong's Concordance

Endued with special honor:

Perplexed - we'll understand it better by and by (from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

Some years ago, a teenage girl went to church camp. She was asked to sing a solo for the vesper service. The campers and the counselors knew that her father had died a few months before, suddenly and unexpectedly. So they were greatly moved when she sang a song of assurance that God would someday make everything plain to her. Mary could have sung such a song. She was perplexed at the visit of the angel. She was perplexed at the visit of the shepherds in Bethlehem ([Luke 2:19](#)). She was perplexed at the wisdom of the boy Jesus when he was in the temple at age twelve ([Luke 2:42, 51](#)). No doubt she was perplexed often during his ministry and certainly at his crucifixion. Eventually, however, she did understand. The disciples also were sometimes perplexed, but later they came to understand as well ([John 12:16](#)). Often, we are like Mary and the disciples. We do not understand things that happen to us or to someone whom we love. Sometimes, years later perhaps, we come to understand. In other cases we will not understand until we get to Heaven. But still we believe that the old songs are correct. We believe that we will understand it better by and by, and we believe that someday he will make it plain to us. Until then we live simply by trusting him. We live in an age when people want to understand everything fully. It takes faith, and a lot of patience to wait for the answer to our perplexity. But such faith and patience will be rewarded. If it is not at some time later in this life, then certainly it will be in the life to come.

Question - How can we and others grasp the significance of Jesus (from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

Mary probably did not grasp the full significance of Jesus as Savior—at least, not right away. Many people today do not grasp the significance, either. In a culture that rejects the idea of moral absolutes, the concept of sin is foreign to many today—so people do not realize their need to be saved from sin. How can we impress on people the need for salvation and the truth that Jesus is the only one who can provide it?

Birth Through a Prepared Vessel (Luke 1:30-33)

30 Then 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 bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus.

32 "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.

33 "And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."

Prepared by not being afraid (30)

Fear God, not man, because God can destroy the body and soul (Matt 10:28)

Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

Don't fear, be ready to die if necessary and pray for God's will to be done (Acts 21:13-14)

13 Then Paul answered, "Why are you weeping and breaking my heart? I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." 14 When he would not be dissuaded, we gave up and said, "The Lord's will be done."

Don't fear or worry but keep the faith (2 Tim 4:6-8)

6 For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

Don't fear, just be faithful and the reward is the crown of life (Rev 2:10)

Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life.

Don't fear, trust God (John 14:1)

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me.

Prepared when called (31-32)

Called to do good works (2 Tim 2:20-21)

20 In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for noble purposes and some for ignoble. 21 If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work.

Called to give an answer for hope in God (1 Peter 3:15)

15 But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,

Prepared when called because no one knows when Jesus will return (Matt 24:44)

44 So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.

Prepared when called because the end time is nearer than we think (Rom 13:11-12)

11 And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. 12 The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.

Prepared when called because the day of the Lord is coming (2 Peter 3:11-13)

11 Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives 12 as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. 13 But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.

Prepared for eternity (33)

Prepared for eternity in a kingdom that cannot be shaken (Heb 12:28)

28 Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe;

Prepared for eternity in God's eternal glory (1 Peter 5:10)

10 After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.

Prepared for eternity in Jesus (Col 2:6-7)

6 So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, 7 rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

Prepared for eternity by remaining in Jesus (John 15:5-7)

5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. 6 If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. 7 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.

Prepared for eternity by focusing on the godly unseen (2 Cor 4:17-18)

17 For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. 18 So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

Birth Through a Willing Vessel (Luke 1:34-40)

34 Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?"

35 And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.

36 "Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren.

37 "For with God nothing will be impossible."

38 Then Mary said, "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

39 Now Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste, to a city of Judah,

40 and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth.

Willing despite understanding (34)

Willing despite understanding through belief (1 Cor 1:18-21)

18 For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 19 For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate." 20 Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? 21 For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.

Willing despite understanding through the power of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 2:3-7)

4 My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, 5 so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power. 6 We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. 7 No, we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began.

Willing despite understanding because human understanding is foolishness in God's sight (1 Cor 3:18-19)

18 Do not deceive yourselves. If any one of you thinks he is wise by the standards of this age, he should become a "fool" so that he may become wise. 19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight.

Willing despite understanding because true wisdom and understanding comes from God (Eph 1:6-9)

7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace 8 that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. 9 And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ

Willingness enabled by the Holy Spirit (35)

Enablement that is glorious (2 Cor 3:7-11)

7 Now if the ministry that brought death, which was engraved in letters on stone, came with glory, so that the Israelites could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of its glory, fading though it was, 8 will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious? 9 If the ministry that condemns men is glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness! 10 For what was glorious has no glory now in comparison with the surpassing glory. 11 And if what was fading away came with glory, how much greater is the glory of that which lasts!

Enablement that is at work in us (Gal 2:8)

8 For God, who was at work in the ministry of Peter as an apostle to the Jews, was also at work in my ministry as an apostle to the Gentiles.

Enablement that comes from the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 2:4-5)

4 My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, 5 so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power.

Enablement that is part of the kingdom of God (1 Cor 4:20)

20 For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power.

Divine enablement (2 Cor 10:3-6)

3 For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. 4 The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. 5 We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. 6 And we will be ready to punish every act of disobedience, once your obedience is complete.

Enablement that strengthens the inner being (Eph 3:16)

16 I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being,

Enablement of the gospel (1 Thess 1:5)

5 because our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake.

Enablement that keeps one from being ashamed to testify about God (2 Tim 1:8)

8 So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God,

Willing to trust God (36-37)

I need to trust God because God never forsakes those who seek Him (Ps 9:10)

10 Those who know your name will trust in you, for you, LORD, have never forsaken those who seek you.

I need to trust God because He is my God (Ps 31:14-15)

14 But I trust in you, O LORD; I say, "You are my God." 15 My times are in your hands; deliver me from my enemies and from those who pursue me.

I need to trust God so that God will make me righteous and just (Ps 37:5-6)

5 Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him and he will do this: 6 He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun.

I need to trust God so that I will not be afraid (Ps 56:4)

4 In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I will not be afraid. What can mortal man do to me?

I need to trust God because no one else can save me (Ps 146:3-6)

3 Do not put your trust in princes, in mortal men, who cannot save. 4 When their spirit departs, they return to the ground; on that very day their plans come to nothing. 5 Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD his God, 6 the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them-- the LORD, who remains faithful forever.

I need to trust God because He guides me in the straight ways (Prov 3:5-6)

5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; 6 in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.

I need to trust God so that I can be overflowed with hope (Rom 15:13)

13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Willing to be used (38-40)

Willing to be used by first giving myself to God (2 Cor 8:5)

And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will.

Willing to be used by submitting to God (2 Chron 30:8)

Do not be stiff-necked, as your fathers were; submit to the LORD. Come to the sanctuary, which he has consecrated forever. Serve the LORD your God, so that his fierce anger will turn away from you.

Willing to be used by offering myself to God as an instrument of righteousness (Rom 6:13)

Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness.

Willing to be used by living for the Lord because I belong to Him (Rom 14:8)

If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.

Willing to be used by honoring God with my body (1 Cor 6:19-20)

19 Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; 20 you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Concluding Thought From Bob Deffinbaugh

From the series: Luke: The Gospel of the Gentiles

I believe that Luke's record of the angelic announcements to Zacharias and to Mary provide us with a study in contrasts. Zacharias was a man; Mary was a woman. Zacharias and his wife were elderly; Mary was young. Zacharias and Elizabeth were married; Mary was a virgin, only engaged to be married; Zacharias doubted the angel's message; Mary believed. In Elizabeth's sixth month, Gabriel appeared to Mary, announcing to her that she would miraculously bear a child who would be Israel's Messiah. Her child would be great in the sight of God, and called the "son of the Most High" (v. 32). He would reign forever on the throne of his father David (vv. 32-33). Mary had a request of the angel Gabriel, too, but her request was not for a sign, but for clarification. Zacharias wanted some kind of proof that he and his wife would have a child in their old age. Mary wanted clarification as to what she was to do, in order to cooperate with the purposes of God, as the angel announced them to her. She wished to learn how her conception would be achieved, since she was a virgin. She was asking for clarification, not confirmation. There is a world of difference between her request and that of Zacharias. Hers stemmed from her faith; the question of Zacharias stemmed from his lack of faith. Gabriel explained to Mary that she would not need to do anything, that the conception in her womb would be

the result of God's miraculous intervention It was to be a miraculous virgin conception. Therefore, the child will be called the "Son of God" (v. 35). As a further word of encouragement to Mary, Gabriel informed her that her elderly relative, Elizabeth, was in her sixth month of pregnancy, which bore testimony to the fact that nothing is impossible with God (vv. 36-37). Mary's response is a marvelous testimony to her faith in God and her submission to His will: "Behold the bondservant of the Lord; be it done to me according to your word" (v. 38). No one could have asked for any better response. What a marvelous testimony to the magnificence of Mary, a topic which we will take up more in detail in our next lesson.

From URL: <https://bible.org/seriespage/silence-shattered-luke-11-38>

Conclusion from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Jesus' conception began the climax of God's saving plan. What God called Mary to do was unique. But the larger truth is that God consistently does his work through the seemingly weak. The child whom Mary bore was part of that pattern. Though all-powerful, he ministered among the weak and sick. Though without sin, he willingly associated with sinners (Luke 5:30-32). We serve our mighty king not by lording it over people, but by serving them (Luke 22:25-27). We see God's kingdom advance not in the rich, powerful institutions of the world, but as the Spirit of God empowers his people from the inside. Like Mary, will we trust the God who issues the call?

Practical Points from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator

1. God is in control as He works out His plan of salvation for mankind (Luke 1:26-27)
2. As God had a plan for Mary, so He has a plan for us (vs. 28)
3. God deals with His people with grace and encouragement when they do not understand His workings (vss. 29-30)
4. God always fulfills His promises (Luke 1:31-33; cf. II Sam. 7:12-17)
5. Questioning God should strengthen the believer's faith, for the God of truth has the answers (Luke 1:34-37)
6. Obedience to the Lord is the key to God's blessings (vss. 38-40)