

“And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary...” Lenski added: “Farther than this the miracle could not be revealed, for the human mind could not follow farther (71).”

- b. ³⁶ And behold, even your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age; and she who was called barren is now in her sixth month. ³⁷ For nothing will be impossible with God.” // Mary believed *and yet she needed reassurance*. Think about the father of the demon-possessed boy; Jesus said to him: “All things are possible to him who believes.” Upon hearing those words, “Immediately the boy’s father cried out and said, “I do believe; help my unbelief.” (Mark 9:15-27 NAU) So, to encourage Mary’s faith, Gabriel told her about Elizabeth; she was barren and old, nevertheless, *she was now six months pregnant!* Therefore, Mary should know with *even greater certainty* that the Lord can do anything!

Conclusion: ³⁸ And Mary said, “Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her. // Mary was a faithful young Christian, *a forgiven sinner who loved her Lord*; therefore, she wanted to do His will – *even if she could not fully comprehend it*. May our attitude be the same *in every circumstance*: Lord, not my will, *but may Your will be done in all that I say and do!* Now, may the Lord work through us to help others *know about and benefit from* the true meaning of Christmas! And all God’s people said: *Amen!*

“The Birth of *Jesus* is Foretold!”

Based on Luke 1:26-38 NAU
3rd Wednesday of Advent – 2011
December 14 → 11:00 & 7:00

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ, today, we are continuing in Luke chapter 1. Last week the angel Gabriel told Zacharias about *his future son*, who would “turn many of the sons of Israel back to the Lord their God.” (1:16) Today, that same angel Gabriel will talk with Mary about *her future son*, who would be “the Son of the Most High,” *the Savior of all!*

1. **Gabriel Greets Mary:**

- a. The situation – ²⁶ Now in the sixth month [*when Elizabeth was in the sixth month of her pregnancy with John the Baptizer*] the angel Gabriel [*who had also appeared to Zacharias*] was sent from God [*with a message; now, notice how the target of the message is narrowed down*] to a city in Galilee [*What city? The one*] called Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin [*Which virgin? The one*] engaged to a man whose name was Joseph [*Which Joseph? The one*], of the descendants of David; and [*What was the virgin’s name?*] the virgin’s name was Mary. // The Greek word, *which we translate Mary*, is pronounced Miriam (Μαριάμ) – *the same as the sister of Moses.*
- i. They were engaged – “...the Jewish betrothal / engagement (the promise to marry), was public and had vows that constituted virtual marriage and needed only that the bridegroom should

- ♦ come at the set time, ♦ take his bride,
- ♦ celebrate, and ♦ live with her (Lenski, 60).”
- ii. Both were descendants of David – “Mary was a descendant of David, as was Joseph (Mt. 1:16); so Jesus could rightly be called a ‘son’ of David (CSSB).”
- b. The greeting – ²⁸ And coming in, he said to her, “Greetings, favored one! The Lord *is* with you.” ²⁹ But she was very perplexed at *this* statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this was. //
 - i. Why is Gabriel’s greeting of Mary well known? It is part of the famous phrase: “Hail Mary...” or “Ave Maria” “The prayer incorporates two passages from Saint Luke’s Gospel: ‘Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee’ (Luke 1:28), and ‘Blessed art thou amongst women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb’ (Luke 1:42). In mid-13th-century Western Europe the prayer consisted only of these words with the single addition of the name ‘Mary’ after the word ‘Hail’ ...”¹
 - ii. Why was Mary called “favored one”? “The special grace on account of which the angel greets Mary is **God’s selection of her to be the mother of his Son** (Lenski, 62).” She is NOT special of herself, *but she is very special because God chose to bring His Son into the world through her!*
 - iii. Why was it important for Mary to know that the Lord was with her? Since Mary would soon be pregnant – *but not yet married, thus open to ridicule and even death* – she was blessed to know about God’s presence and help!

2. **Gabriel Tells Mary about Jesus:** ³⁰ The angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God [“...divine grace is always found, never earned (Lenski, 64).”]. ³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus [*which means “the Lord saves”*]. // Both Mary and Joseph (Mt. 1:21) were commanded to give Mary’s firstborn the name Jesus!
 - a. ³² He will be great [*the greatest of all*] and will be called the Son of the Most High [*the God-Man; “He is God, begotten from the substance of the Father, before all ages; and He is man, born from the substance of His mother in this age” (Athanasian Creed)]*]; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; // David was a great king; *Jesus is King of kings and Lord of lords!*
 - b. ³³ and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end.” // Who belongs to the house of Jacob – *to God’s forever family?* Paul wrote in Romans: “...it is not the children of the flesh ₁ of Abraham and of Jacob, ₁ who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants [*in other words, those who – by God’s grace – believe in Jesus as their Savior*].” (9:8 NAU)
3. **Mary Requests an Explanation:** ³⁴ Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?” // What was she asking? She wasn’t doubting what Gabriel had said; *she knew the Lord could do anything*; she was just wondering HOW He would actually do it.
 - a. ³⁵ The angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God. // What does that mean? We confess in the Apostles’ Creed:

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ave_maria