

# Lord and King

Luke 1:26-38

**26** In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, **27** to a virgin engaged to a man named Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. **28** And the angel came to her and said, "Rejoice, favored woman! The LORD is with you." **29** But she was deeply troubled by this statement, wondering what kind of greeting this could be. **30** Then the angel told her: Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. **31** Now listen: You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will call His name Jesus. **32** He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the LORD God will give Him the throne of His father David. **33** He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end. **34** Mary asked the angel, "How can this be, since I have not been intimate with a man?" **35** The angel replied to her: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore, the holy One to be born will be called the Son of God. **36** And consider your relative Elizabeth—even she has conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called childless. **37** For nothing will be impossible with God." **38** "I am the LORD's slave," said Mary. "May it be done to me according to your word." Then the angel left her.



# Exploration

If you asked several random people at your workplace or in your community to share with you who Jesus is, what kinds of answers do you think you would get? Some would likely say that Jesus was a great man or even that He had lots of helpful things to say. They might identify with particular teachings of His that they think are admirable—don't judge (Matt. 7:1) or love your enemies (Matt. 5:44). Before Jesus was born, God sent the angel Gabriel to Mary to tell her exactly who Jesus would be. As we look at this divine declaration about Jesus in Luke 1, we will see that while Jesus certainly was a great man and a great teacher, He is much more than those things. It is crucial we know who Jesus is because it is only when we know Him rightly that we will celebrate and prioritize Him appropriately. Jesus is worthy of utmost celebration because He is our Savior, God, and King.

## CONTEXT (LUKE 1–2)

Matthew and Luke both began their Gospels with birth narratives. The first Gospel presents the birth of Jesus from Joseph's perspective. Matthew recorded Joseph's consideration of divorcing the pregnant woman to whom he was betrothed (Matt. 1:19). Matthew recorded an angel appearing to Joseph to explain Mary's miraculous conception (1:20-21). Matthew also recorded an angel's appearance to Joseph, telling him to flee to Egypt with his family to escape Herod's forthcoming attempt to murder the Child (2:13).

In contrast to Matthew, Luke wrote of issues that would have concerned Mary. We read of Mary's concern after an angel referred to her as a "favored woman" (1:29). Luke recorded Mary's response of "treasuring up all these things in her heart and meditating on them" (2:19). Luke recorded that Joseph took Mary and Jesus back to their hometown of Nazareth (2:39), where "the boy grew up and became strong, filled with wisdom, and God's grace was on Him" (2:40). Luke also recorded that Joseph took his family to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover (2:41-50). Departing Jerusalem, neither Joseph nor Mary knew that Jesus, age 12, had stayed behind. One can visualize Joseph and Mary as they frantically sought and found Jesus in the temple complex, listening and asking questions to the teachers (2:46), astonishing "all those who heard Him" (2:47). Luke concluded his birth narrative with: "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and with people" (2:52).



# Conversation

Begin this session by discussing the following quick response questions with students. Do not spend too much time here, but allow enough time for several students to share their answers to these questions.

› **What is the best news you have ever received? What made it such good news?**

› **How is the promise of Jesus' birth good news?**

In Luke 1, the angel Gabriel came to Mary and told her she would be the mother of the Son of God. Being a poor, engaged, young virgin would have been reason enough to concern Mary. The news she heard troubled her at first, but the angel helped her to see the incredible honor, but also the huge weight of what was to happen. Mary's child represented the best news the world would ever hear, that our Savior, God, and King had come to dwell among us.

## LUKE 1:26-30

Earlier in Luke 1, the angel Gabriel appeared to Zechariah to tell him about his wife, Elizabeth's, unexpected pregnancy. This time God sent Gabriel to prepare Mary to be the mother of the Messiah. Gabriel's visit represents the heavenly council bringing God's news to His people, revealing what He was about to do.

› **Describe Mary's initial reaction to the angel Gabriel (v. 29). Why do you think she reacted this way?**

Angels are terrifying creatures. When Daniel was visited by an angel in Daniel 8:17, he was terrified. When Gideon realized he was speaking to the Angel of the Lord, he said, "Oh no, Lord GOD! I have seen the Angel of the LORD face to face!" But the LORD said to him, "Peace to you. Don't be afraid, for you will not die" (Judg. 6:22-23). To say that Mary was "deeply troubled" at the sight of Gabriel makes her seem pretty brave by comparison! Mary may also have been troubled by her circumstances. Things were tough for most people in the first century. People subsisted on farming each year or whatever work they could find to buy food. There was no government safety net. An injury or a bad year could mean utter poverty. Women were in an especially precarious position as they didn't have much, and most jobs weren't available to them. When you consider that Mary was in Nazareth, which was especially poor, and that she was a young woman, an out- of-wedlock pregnancy would make her especially vulnerable. Is it any wonder that Gabriel's announcement might have caused Mary to be afraid?

---

›› **ITEM 7 (LEADER PACK)** Display the **Angelic Encounters** pack item and point to it during your time with students. Many students have misconceptions about angels, so these angelic encounters will help show how angels often struck fear in the hearts of people.

---



# Leader Prep

## LUKE 1:26-29

Scholars recognize two parallels within Jesus' birth announcement. First, the Old Testament records similar birth announcements of Isaac (Gen. 17:15-22; 18:9-15) and Samuel (1 Sam. 1:9-20). The conceptions and births of Isaac and Samuel demonstrated God's great acts in the past. Second, Luke recorded the similarities and differences between the birth of Jesus and the birth of John the Baptist. With the unique manner of Mary's conception, Luke confirmed Jesus' superiority over John.

In the sixth month refers not to the six month of the year, but to the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, as indicated by 1:36. In order to help his non-Palestinian readers understand location, Luke qualified the location of Nazareth as a town in Galilee. The same angel, Gabriel, also delivered to Zechariah the announcement regarding the birth of John (1:19).

Luke described Mary as a virgin engaged. He provided additional support of Mary's virginity in verse 34: "Mary asked the angel, 'How can this be, since I have not been intimate with a man?'" The birth of Jesus to a virgin indicates Jesus' deity. The fact that Mary gave birth to Jesus underscores His humanity. The virgin birth unites, in unmistakable terms, the humanity of Jesus and the deity of Christ. Equally, Jesus is fully human and fully divine.

The word *engaged* referred to the first step of a two-step Jewish marriage process. The first step involved a formal agreement of marriage accompanied by a bridal gift. This engagement could not be broken in any manner other than divorce (see Matt. 1:19). The second step occurred approximately one year later with the actual marriage ceremony. The husband would then take his wife home and consummate the marriage.

God favored Mary in that He chose her to give birth to the Messiah. Mary did not possess a superior holiness that warranted this privilege. God chose Mary as He chose the Israelites: "*The LORD ... chose you, not because you were more numerous than all peoples, for you were the fewest of all people. But because the LORD loved you*" (Deut. 7:7-8).

Gabriel's words confused and puzzled Mary. What prompted Mary to be deeply troubled by this statement? We can imagine that an angel speaking to her would create confusion and anxiety. In addition, Mary knew her pregnancy would create misunderstandings—even accusations—and this would have troubled her.



As Scripture reveals, God had blessed previously infertile women with sons: Sarah gave birth to Isaac (see Gen. 18:13; 21:1), Manoah's wife gave birth to Samson (see Judges 13:2,24), and Hannah gave birth to Samuel (see 1 Sam. 1:2,20). Each of these sons had been mightily used by God. Luke 1:7 tells us Elizabeth was barren also, and both she and Zechariah were beyond child-bearing years. But none of these special babies had been born to a virgin, which Mary was (see Luke 1:27).

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



# Conversation

› **How did Gabriel respond to Mary's fears? How might Gabriel's declaration in verse 30 have given Mary the hope and courage she needed to embrace the message she was receiving?**

When John saw Jesus on the island of Patmos, he “fell at His feet like a dead man” (Rev. 1:17), when Isaiah saw the Lord in a vision he feared that he would be consumed by God’s holiness. There is nothing as powerful or as awesome as the Lord. Whatever you may be afraid of, nothing compares to the power and might of God. This is why it is comforting to know that we have His favor in Christ! As Paul wrote, “If God is for us, who is against us?” (Rom. 8:31). Literally nothing can harm us if God does not allow it, and if He does, we can be certain that “all things work together for the good of those who love God” (Rom. 8:28). The secret to overcoming fear is to grow in our trust and confidence that God watches over us.

## LUKE 1:31-33

After affirming Mary and attempting to put her fears at ease, Gabriel then revealed the purpose of his visit. Gabriel delivered a shocking message to the young Mary.

› **What do these verses tell us about Jesus—who He is and what He came to do?**

› **What does the name “Jesus” mean? What does this tell us about Jesus’ mission? What can we infer from this about our mission as His followers?**

The name “Jesus” is a transliteration of the Hebrew name “Joshua” and it contains the Hebrew root *yasa* which literally means “saves.” Mary was commanded by God to give this name to her miracle Son because He would save His people from their sins (Matt. 1:21). In addition to being the promised Messiah who would redeem God’s people (Isa. 9:6-7), Gabriel also informed Mary that Jesus would be God’s Son (v. 32) and establish an everlasting kingdom (v. 33). Luke identified Mary’s husband, Joseph, as a member of the house of David (v. 27). This connected Jesus, by adoption, to the promise God made to David in 2 Samuel 7:12-13. Here was the promise of a king from David’s family who would establish a forever kingdom. Jesus was the ultimate fulfillment of that promise.

Challenge students to take some time to consider the significance of who Jesus was and is: God in human flesh. It is not enough to have a correct knowledge of Jesus. The reality that He is God’s Son, our Savior, and our King should radically shape the way we live. Jesus is King and He calls us to join Him in His kingdom work by shining forth His glory to the lost people around us (Matt. 5:13-15) and making disciples of Him (Matt. 28:18-20).







# Conversation

## LUKE 1:34-38

When it was declared to her that she would give birth to the Messiah who would redeem God's people and establish God's forever kingdom on earth, Mary asked the obvious question, "how is this possible?"

› **Discuss the significance of the virgin birth of Jesus. What difference does the virgin birth make? Why was it necessary?**

› **What does the virgin birth confirm about Jesus' identity?**

The virgin birth of Jesus is a foundational truth in Christianity. Mary was a virgin, and Jesus was conceived by the miraculous action of God without a human father. Mary's virgin-born Son would be God Himself living among His people. It was necessary for Jesus to be born of a virgin for a number of reasons, but here are the essential ones: (1) so that He would not inherit Adam's sin nature (Rom. 5:12-19), (2) so that He could be simultaneously fully God and fully man, and (3) so that he would fulfill Old Testament prophecy (Isa. 7:14). Our salvation is a supernatural gift of God's grace, initiated by Jesus' birth to a virgin mother.

› **Read verses 35-37 again. What insight did the angel give Mary into God's mysterious work in her life?**

› **How did Mary respond to Gabriel's announcement? What can we learn from her response?**

Jesus, the Son of God, was conceived of the Holy Spirit. The angel clarified Jesus' identity as of divine origin. Who Jesus is outweighs even the miracle of how He came to be conceived in Mary. Jesus' birth was essential for us because we are separated from God by sin, and only God Himself can restore that relationship. Jesus coming to earth as a man was the first step in His redemptive work in our lives.

Mary responded to this news in exactly the right way, declaring herself as God's slave and submitting fully to God's will even though the task ahead of her surely felt too great to bear. The call to follow Christ is a call too great for any of us to bear. It is a call to follow Jesus' way of life by taking up our crosses and following Him (Matt. 16:24). In other words, Mary did not see herself as capable of the calling God placed on her life, but humbly embraced it, putting her trust in God to see her through and to fulfill all His purposes. Similarly, the mission God has given you and your students is too big for you to handle on your own. Thankfully, however, it is not too big for God. He invites us to humble ourselves before Him so that as we trust Him, we might see His perfect power on display in our lives and the lives of those around us.



# Leader Prep

## LUKE 1:34-38

Understandably, Mary had questions. The Hebrews recognized Joseph and Mary as husband and wife, even though Joseph and Mary had not consummated their marriage (Matt. 1:25). Given her virginity, she voiced her greatest puzzlement: “How can this be, since I have never been intimate with a man?”

While Mary questioned the method, Luke records no evidence that she doubted the announcement. Contrast Mary’s lack of a request for a sign with Zechariah’s need for the same. When told his aged wife would conceive, Zechariah asked “How can I know this?” (1:18). Whereas Gabriel informed Zechariah that his son (John) would be “filled with the Holy Spirit while still in his mother’s womb” (1:15), the angel informed Mary that her child would be conceived by the Holy Spirit. Again, Luke demonstrated Jesus’ superiority over John.

Attempting to ease Mary’s anxiety, Gabriel told her the power of the Most High will overshadow you. In the Old Testament, the concept of overshadowing referred to God’s presence in protecting His people (see Ps. 91:4; 140:7). Gabriel insisted that God would protect Mary.

Although not requested, Gabriel sought to encourage Mary by giving her a sign. In three months, Mary’s long-barren relative, Elizabeth, would give birth to a son in her old age. With this announcement, perhaps Mary began to understand Gabriel’s words: *nothing will be impossible with God*.

Given the circumstances of an imminent pregnancy, who could have thought less of Mary had she requested a sign of God’s presence and power? Mary understood, in Jewish custom, the binding nature of her engagement to Joseph. She anticipated Joseph’s initial misunderstanding (Matt. 1:1). Mary expected the stigma of being looked upon as a sinful woman and the loss of her reputation. She also knew Jewish law dictated the stoning of an engaged woman exposed as having sexual relations with another man (Deut. 22:23-24).

Mary’s did not require a sign, but responded simply with, “I am the Lord’s slave.” Mary’s use of the word *slave* demonstrates her recognition of her position in life as well as God’s preeminence in all things. He was the Most High and the Lord God. She was His slave.

Mary communicated a humble commitment to God with her final words to Gabriel. As the slave of God, Mary submitted to follow God’s plan and what He had asked her to do.



Mary and Elizabeth both conceived children in a miraculous manner. Elizabeth’s son would proclaim the good news. Mary’s son is the good news.



# Application

## CENTRAL TRUTH

*Jesus is worthy of full devotion—He is our Savior, God, and King.*

---

➤➤ **ITEM 1** (LEADER PACK) Discuss this session's Central Truth and also recall the other Central Truths covered so far using the **Central Truths** pack item which is included in the leader pack. Review these with students on a regular basis so that they will remember and build on what they've learned.

---

## NOW WHAT?

- › **What does it look like for us to live in awe of Jesus? Why is this necessary as we live on mission for Him?**
- › **What is one area in your life where you need to trust God and submit to Him like Mary did? What next step do you need to take to trust God in that area?**

Mary was able to embrace a calling that was too big for her because she trusted that God was good and powerful where she was weak. Help students to see that the calling God has placed on their lives is too great for them—that's why He sent Jesus. Embracing God's call on your life requires first recognizing His sufficiency and grace. The key to fully embracing the mission our Savior has given us is recognizing who He is and what He has done. When those truths begin to shape our thoughts and actions, we will discover the presence of Christ in us that empowers us to live on mission for Him.

- › **How should the reality of who Jesus is (Son of God, everlasting King, Savior, etc.) shape the way we live? Have these realities shaped your life this week? If not, what needs to change in your life?**
- › **Do you think of yourself as God's slave? Why or why not? What is one step you will take to humble yourself before God and rely fully on Him?**



## PERSONAL CHALLENGE

Finish your group time with these thoughts and encourage students to memorize the verse listed for this session. Memorizing God's Word allows it to dwell in us and allows Him to speak through His Word in our times of need. Also encourage your group to take advantage of the Keep on Digging section in their Personal Study Guides and to take the truths of this section and apply them to their lives.

- › **Dwell:** Read Philippians 2:1-11 and Colossians 1:15-21. Then make a list of everything these passages tell us about who Jesus is and what He came to do. When you are finished, journal a prayer of praise to God thanking Him for sending us the perfect Savior.
- › **Memorize:** Luke 1:32-33
- › **Pray:** Thank God for loving us so much that He willingly took on flesh in order to dwell among us, serve us, die for us, and ultimately rise victoriously for us. Pray that the example Christ gave us of humble self-sacrifice would empower us to take authentic steps toward living fully and passionately on mission for Him. Ask God to help you to redirect the focus of your life away from yourself and to the praise, glory, and fame of Jesus Christ.

## KEEP ON DIGGING

Read the following passages, then journal a sentence or two about what each tells you about Jesus. How might having a greater awareness of these truths about Jesus empower us to live on mission for Him?

- › Psalm 110
- › Isaiah 9:6-7; 53:1-12
- › John 1:1-18
- › Philippians 2:5-11
- › Hebrews 1:1-14
- › 1 John 1:1-4



For an expository verse-by-verse sermon outline/discussion guide that complements this session with a study in Galatians, see [lifeway.com/ETBWIN17JJR](http://lifeway.com/ETBWIN17JJR). For **free** training, go to [MinistryGrid.com/web/ExploreTheBible](http://MinistryGrid.com/web/ExploreTheBible).