

The Chosen Virgin

Often, as I present these Holy Scriptures to us, I like to speak about God's mysterious secret wisdom. It is a special kind of knowledge and understanding that He will make known to us if we truly love Him and if we diligently seek after Him. Listen again to the way He tells us about that in 1 Corinthians 2, beginning in verse 6.

⁶ . . . We speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. ⁷But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the (secret) hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, ⁸which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

⁹ But, as it is written:

"Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him."

¹⁰But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. (1 Corinthians 2:6-10)

In these next words that I'll read for us from Luke chapter 1, we will see those special "secret mysteries of God" unfolding right before our eyes, secret wisdom that reveals a very special plan that God is carrying forward, a plan to provide redemption and salvation to everyone who will turn their hearts to Him. But folks, to see and to hear and to understand these truths, you and I must be willing to allow the Holy Spirit to open the eyes of our hearts. Listen, beginning in verse 26 of Luke chapter 1 . . .

26 In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from 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. And the virgin's name was Mary. 28 And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" 29 But she was greatly troubled at the saying and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. 30 And 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 bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High God. And the Lord God will give to 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." 34 And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?" 35 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. 36 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. 37 For nothing will be impossible with God." 38 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. (Luke 1:26-38)

As I have said to us on other occasions, most of us here today, having been brought up in this church and other churches like it, we know these words well. But that is not so for most of the other people on the earth. Most of them have never read or heard these words before. And even for those who have heard these words, many of them still do not understand and accept them as they should.

Why is that so? Why can they not understand these words as we do. It's because, as those words there 1 Corinthians 2, that I read to us a few moments ago tell us, it is only by the power of the Holy Spirit living within us that we are able to accept and understand such precious truths. And while we might not understand why God does it the way He does. It is all part of His mysterious plans.

Thankfully, for you and me, the Holy Spirit is in each of us who have received Him as Savior, and He is in this place. And thanks be to God, He will make all of these precious words clear to our hearts and minds.

. . . These words in front of us today speak about a plan that God was putting into place, beginning with the simple and obscure birth of a little baby, a birth that very few people would even know about for the first many years of His life. But then that plan would suddenly blossom into a fullness that would spread throughout the whole earth.

Here, we read about a very special angel, Gabriel, an angel who was so special that he stood in the presence of God continually, the same mysterious and powerful angel who had earlier spoken with Zacharias and told him about how His wife Elizabeth would bear a son in her old age, a son who would be named John and who would grow to be a great prophet, a prophet who would "prepare the way", "making straight the path" for the coming Savior.

That same powerful angel was now standing before Mary, a young virgin. And there, He told her that she was highly favored in God's sight and that she has been especially chosen by God to bear a child.

We know also, from the words of Psalm 139, that some years earlier, at the moment of Mary's own conception, God had woven her together in her mother's womb, especially preparing her heart, soul and mind for the blessed task He was now calling her to do.

We can't know all the things that were going through the mind of Mary as she listened to the words being spoken by this fearsome angel, but we can imagine.

Mary was a devout believer and had, over her young life, probably heard many sermons preached about the coming Messiah who would save her people from their sins. And though she would have believed those stories, I can imagine that there would have also been times in her young life when she would have had doubts and questions about those prophecies, whether they would really come true. "Would there really come a Messiah who would save His people from their sins?"

And also, most likely over those years, some of Mary's friends would have also at times voiced their skepticism about the promised Messiah, putting more doubts into Mary's mind.

But now here, Gabriel, a very special messenger from God, was bringing Mary the answer to all her questions. Gabriel was saying to her, "Yes Mary, there truly is a coming Messiah, a Savior, and you have been highly favored and chosen to be the one to bring Him into this world"! Verse 31,

³¹ . . . behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. ³²He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High God. (Luke 1:31-32)

That day, all the things that Mary had, in the past, probably only held as possibilities, began to become real, really real. And now a powerful angel was standing before her telling her that she had been especially chosen by God to bear a child.

But he was telling her that this child that she would bear would not be like any other child, not even like the special one who would be born to her relative, Elizabeth. No, this Son would be like no other that had ever been or ever would be born on the whole earth. This Son would literally be the Son of the Most High God, and this Son would be the Savior of anyone and everyone who would put their faith and trust in Him.

But Mary was troubled as she heard his words, troubled I'm sure for many reasons. The first of which was because she knew that she had never been with a man. And she knew that the normal and "natural" way of conceiving a child was through having intimate relations with a man. And she spoke those words to the angel. She said in verse 34,

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

³⁵ . . . "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the (Most High God) will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God. (Luke 1:34-35)

Here in these words, God is making our understanding as plain and as simple as possible. Mary was a “virgin”. That was confirmed to us by Mary telling the angel that she had never “known”, had never had intimate relations with a man. And folks, God wants you and me, and all who would desire to know the truth, to fully understand, to fully accept and to fully embrace this very important truth. Mary was a “virgin”.

Why is it so important for you and me to know that Mary was truly a virgin? It's because many people, all through the ages, and especially in today's culture, have desired to reduce Jesus down to no more than the stature of a mere man, and have denied and disputed the fact that Mary was a virgin.

They only understand the “natural” way of human conception, and they insist that it is impossible to believe otherwise. But the angel summed up the truth in verse 37, when He said simply,

³⁷For with God nothing will be impossible.” (Luke 1:37)

Folks, Mary was truly a virgin! Some might ask, “But is it even important that Mary be a virgin, and if it is, then why?”

Let me say to you in the strongest of terms, that yes, it is ever so important, for many reasons, the most important of which is, the Son, that “Holy One” that would be born to Mary would be God's Son, His one and only “begotten” Son. He would bear the bloodline of God Himself and not the bloodline of men.

Men, since the fall of Adam, had carried and passed along a bloodline that bore a corrupted predisposition to sin, a “sin nature”. And yes, women also have that same corrupt genetic predisposition, but apparently from the way God went about this part of His plan, the sin nature of mankind could not be passed down solely through the blood of a woman.

Jesus was coming to the earth for a very special and specific purpose, to be the sacrifice “Lamb of God” who would take away the sins of the world. And for Him to be that sacrifice “Lamb of God”, He would need to be perfect, without spot or stain or wrinkle or blemish, perfect in every way.

If Jesus were to be born with a “sin nature” of His own, He would be imperfect and unable to be the substitute for our sins. He would even need a Savior Himself. So Jesus needed to be born of a “virgin”, completely free of any sin nature.

And He would be! Jesus would be the perfect “Lamb of God”, the perfect sacrifice, the perfect substitute, the “propitiation”, the perfect atonement for our sins. Our sins and the sins of all the world would be able to be placed upon Him and then wiped away. 2 Corinthians 5,

²¹God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Corinthians 5:21)

Let me pause for a moment and restate all that I have been saying, because it is so important that we understand what God has done through the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus. Simply put, for Jesus to be able to be the perfect “Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world”, He Himself had to be pure and holy, without spot, stain, wrinkle or blemish. He could not have a nature like yours and mine that has a “bent towards sinning”. And so, again, the answer to the question is, “Yes, it was absolutely necessary that Mary be a virgin.”

And again, God wanted to make this point very plain to us, because He knew that the “world, the flesh and the devil” would gather their forces together to dispute the possibility of it all.

And under normal and “natural” circumstances, it truly is impossible to conceive a child without the involvement of a man. But not so with God! God does not exist in this “natural” realm that we live in. His realm is the realm of the “supernatural” where wonderful and magnificent things take place even more naturally than the natural. With God, nothing is impossible.

Folks, we are reminded in Hebrews chapter 11 that God simply had only to speak and the whole universe, the heavens and the earth were formed and created. He had only to take some dust from the earth and form the body of Adam. He had only to breathe into Adam's nostrils and Adam would become a living soul. He had only to take a rib from the side of Adam to create Eve. So, for God to enable a “virgin” to conceive a child was no great task at all.

As Gabriel said to Mary in verse 35,

³⁵ . . . “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the (Most High God) will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God. (Luke 1:35)

The greater consideration here in these words is not merely that God is able to produce a child in a woman's womb, He did that with Elizabeth, and He has done that, using “natural conception”, for untold millions of other women over the years.

And it is not even that God was able to produce a child in the womb of a virgin, but rather the greater point for us to understand is exactly “Who” God produced in this mother's womb. This baby would be God's own Son, described here as “that Holy One”. This baby would be the Son of the Most High God, “divine” in His very nature from the first moment of conception.

You and I can't understand the word "divine" very well. Yes, we can read its definition in the dictionary, and we can hear theologians of our day give their opinions about its meaning, but our comprehension falls woefully short. To be truly "Divine" is to be on another level of being altogether, completely different from our own. To be truly "Divine" demands an extent of purity and holiness that men and angels can never attain to.

Only God Himself, in His three persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are pure and holy and "Divine". And that was so for the Lord Jesus, even from His first moment in Mary's womb. Jesus was "holy", set apart from all sin from the very first moment He was conceived. Again, verse 35,

³⁵ . . . "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the (Most High God) will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God. (Luke 1:35)

Our task, with the meager inability of our human minds, is not necessarily to fully understand the miraculous thing that these words speak about, but rather, it is our task to simply, by faith, accept and believe it.

And that was Mary's first task also, to by faith, accept and believe all that she had been told, and then to surrender herself completely to the plan that God had in store for her! And she did! Immediately Mary said,

³⁸ . . . "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word." (Luke 1:38)

And that same task that Mary faced is before you and me today, personally. And we must ask ourselves, "Do we believe?" "Do you, do I truly believe that this young girl, Mary, was visited by an angel and that the Holy Spirit of God conceived in her the very Son of God, the One who would save us from our sins?"

And if you or I do not believe it, then how can we reach past our unbelief? Because we must believe. We have no choice in this matter. Our eternity depends upon our believing this miraculous truth.

Those words that we read at the beginning of our message today about the "secret wisdom" of God and about all of His mysterious ways are being revealed to us in these words. And the greatest of all His mysterious secret wisdom is this truth that is unfolding before us within these words, the "Gospel". And God wants you and me to believe it. And even more, He wants you and me to "receive" it into our souls, because it is only through the "Gospel" that we are saved.

And you and I must be as this young girl, Mary, and say back to God. Yes Lord, I do believe! "Be it unto me according to your word". May we pray.

