

Luke 1:26-35 – Christmas is for Receiving

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: Some people think Christmas is all about giving, so they start planning their presents in August. Later, when they see the smiles on the faces of those who receive those gifts, especially those little people, they feel satisfied. But I am here to tell you today that all your giving, without having received one precious gift first, means nothing – absolutely nothing!

So what is that gift that you so desperately need? How about this gift described in this song? *"I only want you for Christmas, baby. I don't need nothing else. I only want you for Christmas, baby. Tie a ribbon 'round yourself."* Yes, it is wonderful to have a good wife – but that is not sufficient! Death ends that gift. The gift I am speaking of is Jesus, of course. And there are many things about Jesus you must know. He is the most needful and the most perfect gift who keeps on giving – a gift who will last for eternity. This is what you will hear about today.

Our headings are:

The Parents of the Gift

The Plan of the Gift

The Power of The Gift

Our goals are: **That you will see how God cared for you and carefully guided the gift you needed the most, and that you will treasure this gift for eternity.**

The Parents of the Gift

26 Now in the sixth month the **angel Gabriel was sent by God** to a city of Galilee named **Nazareth**,

1. It was most appropriate that God gave Gabriel (Man of God) this private message to give to Mary.

2. It was also appropriate that Mary and Joseph were residents of Nazareth.

We often think more about Bethlehem when we think about Jesus' birth, but Nazareth was the focus of his life. Jesus grew up in Nazareth. His parents had to be from Nazareth.

Matthew 2:23 And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, **"He shall be called a Nazarene."**

The "nun" or the "N" is often used to symbolize "Nazareth," the name given to Christians in Iraq. (My FB moniker.) ISIS terrorists required Christians wear "N" on their clothes and spray-paint it on their houses so they could be taxed or killed. When ISIS killed Christians, the letter "N" was often carved into their bodies, showing they belonged to Jesus of Nazareth. So even in their murderous ways, ISIS was acknowledging Jesus was from Nazareth, confirming the Scriptures.

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!"

2. Mary, the one chosen to be the Gift's mother, was a young unmarried virgin.

Some modern translations (like RSV) use the term "young woman" to refer to Mary, but this is wrong. "Young woman" is not the same as virgin.

Being a virgin was important because if Mary were not a virgin, then the Child born to her would not have been a fit sacrifice for your sins.

Further, if Mary were not a virgin, it would have been no big deal that she would conceive! That was why God gave that sign to Ahaz.) With that said, Mary wasn't perfect, she admitted that (and she was not born so), but she was favored by God.

If, however, Jesus' human body were conceived in the natural way, sin would have passed to him and he wouldn't have been a fit sacrifice for sins.

3. Mary was from the household of David by natural birth and Joseph was from the house of David by natural birth.

This confirmed God's promise of Jesus in the Old Testament to David.

4. Joseph, Mary's betrothed husband, was a poor carpenter, showing that finances didn't matter but faith mattered to be used by God to be the father of Jesus.

5. Mary's "betrothal" to Joseph was considered a legal marriage.

"Betrothal" simply meant the married people were not yet living together as husband and wife.

29 But when she saw him, **she was troubled at his saying**, and considered what manner of greeting this was. 30 Then the angel said to her, **"Do not be afraid**, Mary, for you have found favor with God.

6. Mary was shocked by the appearance of the angel and how he addressed her, but the angel comforted her.

7. Lessons:

a. Jesus, who came through Mary and raised by Mary and Joseph, is the only way to please God. This is why Jesus was the greatest gift of all! If he had not been given to and for man, you would all still be in your sins. Receive this gift or die!
1Timothy 2:5 For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, **the Man Christ Jesus**, 6 who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

b. Feed your faith so you can be used more by God. If you have strong faith, you can be used by God to make this gift available to the whole world. (2Cor 9). The more you realize your wealth, the more you will be willing to share!

The Plan for the Gift

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

1. Gabriel described how the gift would come.

He started with "behold." This meant he was going to say something startling, and it was a startling sign. These were Isaiah's words he echoed...but with the fulfillment.

Isaiah 7:14 "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: **Behold, the virgin shall conceive** and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.

2. God's plan was that the baby, a Son, would be named Jesus, which is the same Hebrew word "Joshua," meaning "Jehovah saves," or "Jehovah is (the source of) salvation.

Jesus' name contains the plan of salvation. **Jesus would give his people life and protect them from eternal death!**

Isaiah 53:5 But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And **by His stripes we are healed**. 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; **And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.**

3. Lessons:

a. Self-wisdom, self-effort, and self-righteousness are the enemies from which you must be delivered. Those are deceptive gifts. You need to clean house and make room to receive this greater gift. You need Christ's death, burial, and resurrection!

b. Your life must reflect the gift of the work of the Savior in how you worship. Your worship must be exceptional.

c. Having received this gift, it is the greatest gift you can share with the world. Those who receive this gift will glorify the Savior.

The Power of the Gift

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**."

1. Jesus was great in his heavenly origin (he was sitting at the right hand of his Father) – the Son of the Highest.

Isaiah 9:6 For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, **Mighty God**, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Jesus was not an angel like Gabriel; he was higher than all angels. He made the angels. **Jesus' power had no limit.** He had power to heal, power to forgive sins, and power to save. He did things only God could do, proving that indeed he was God. He was powerful in his words and in his actions. He was the greatest prophet, priest, and king to have ever graced the earth.

Matthew 28:18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth."

Jesus – Son of the Highest – was greatest in giving love, teaching love, and demonstrating love.

John 13:34 "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; **as I have loved you**, that you also love one another. 35 "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

It is easier to love someone who loves you, or even to love someone you don't know, but who would love someone he knew despised him? Jesus! And he became "sin" for them! That is the greatest love. That's the love he gave to you.

2. Jesus was great in his earthly origins as well – a child of King David – Israel's greatest king.

Psalms 110:1 The LORD said to my Lord, "**Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.**" 2 The LORD shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion. Rule in the midst of Your enemies!

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

3. Jesus will be great in that his reign will be eternal.

His throne will be in heaven with effective rule on earth.

Isaiah 9:7 Of the **increase of His government and peace There will be no end**, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and

justice **From that time forward, even forever...**

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

4. Mary wondered, but never doubted, about how God would work out the plan.

She believed. Luke 1:49. She simply wanted to know how this would happen. This showed her humility.

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**.

5. Then the angel explained that God's Holy Spirit would supernaturally work in her, using her body, to create a body for the Savior.

"Overshadow" was a marriage picture of a man covering his bride. And in order to remind Mary who the gift of her body would be, the angel called Him the *Son of God*.

6. Lesson:

a. Jesus, "Highest One," descended to the lowest place, to give the gift of life to you. That is power!

b. You can and must love the Lord back! How? By worship! By living for him! By telling the world of his love! By inviting them to his house! By helping the needy. **This is the power of the gift at work!**

c. It is true you may doubt Christ is ruling over his people when you see economic collapse, diseases, and terrorism. But Jesus' **kingdom is in you** his children and **you have eternal life**, so his kingdom is in place, it continues to expand, and it can never be destroyed. What a gift you have!

Revelation 11:15 - Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and **He shall reign forever and ever!**"

Daniel 2:44 "And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will **set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed**; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it **shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.**

You have received the gift – a powerful gift! Work now for the expansion of the kingdom.

Psalms 132:15 I will abundantly bless her **provision**; I will satisfy her poor with bread. 16 I will also clothe her **priests** with salvation, And her saints shall shout aloud for joy.

Conclusion:

It is an amazing thing to see God Almighty, even though he was stripped of his glory, was most glorious when he came into the world. The angels sang of it. The shepherds saw it. **He was born as a man** to live and die to save men from their sins. He taught them this. And then he gloriously rose from the dead. **This was God's plan**. **He was great enough and good enough to die for the sins** of the whole world and great enough and good enough to be raised from the dead. And he continues to rule forever to keep his children safe.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus:

1. Enjoy the gift you have received. Christmas is about receiving. Don't live like a pauper! Sing! Smile!

2. Broadcast to the world that you have received this gift. Remember, these verses are not about feeling emotional and giving some money to the Salvation Army's tin at the mall so the hungry can have soup. This isn't about feeling excited about a "rags to riches" story. This isn't even a story about the benefits of a girl living a pure life! **It is a story about a true gift-** a gift that saved your life for eternity and a gift you must share with the world. (Don't forget to share material gifts as well! That type of giving also flows from what you have received!)

3. If you don't broadcast this gift and invite others to enjoy it, then you have to ask yourself: "Am I really converted, or have I become corrupted with this world's gifts?" Whichever it is, fix it today!

Finally, if you are not a believer, will you bow now to the King and let him adopt you as his child, or will he have to stomp you under his feet? Make the right choice.