



## UNSPEAKABLE JOY

### Week 2 | The Joy of Jesus Foretold

#### | KEY THOUGHTS

- Jesus's birth was surrounded by supernatural conditions.
- After the ministry of Malachi, the last Old Testament prophet, God had been silent for 400 years. And **when God spoke again, He proclaimed grace:**
  - When the angel told Mary she had found favor with God, the Greek word translated "favor" is the same word that's also translated "grace" in other places in the Scriptures.
  - "Grace" means favor not earned; **also, it refers to the empowerment of God to do what we can't do ourselves.**
- Though she was certainly a remarkable person, **Mary is not the hero of this story; Jesus is.**
- **Without Jesus, Mary was nothing; but the birth of Jesus—an event in which she was invited to take part—would change history.**
- The angel made 5 predictions:
  - Jesus would be great;
  - He would be the Son of the Most High;
  - God would give Him the throne of David;
  - He would reign over the house of Jacob forever;
  - His kingdom would have no end.
- Because in that culture a son was considered to be the same as his father, the angel's saying He would be "the Son of the Most High" was understood to mean **He was equal with God.**
- Jesus was equal with God from the beginning, and this birth was God's plan from the beginning to rescue the world from sin and death; **this birth was the fulfillment of God's promises.**
- In response to her cousin Elizabeth's Spirit-inspired words, Mary praised God's character; in the Scriptures, **every time God shows up, praise and celebration turns to Him.**

## | SCRIPTURE

<sup>26</sup> In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, <sup>27</sup> to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup> And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" <sup>29</sup> But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. <sup>30</sup> And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup> And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. <sup>32</sup> He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, <sup>33</sup> and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

<sup>34</sup> And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?"

<sup>35</sup> 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. <sup>36</sup> 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. <sup>37</sup> For nothing will be impossible with God." <sup>38</sup> 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.

<sup>39</sup> In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, <sup>40</sup> and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. <sup>41</sup> And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, <sup>42</sup> and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! <sup>43</sup> And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? <sup>44</sup> For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. <sup>45</sup> And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord."

<sup>46</sup> And Mary said,

"My soul magnifies the Lord,

<sup>47</sup> and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

<sup>48</sup> for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed;

<sup>49</sup> for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name.

<sup>50</sup> And his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.

<sup>51</sup> He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts;

<sup>52</sup> he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate;

<sup>53</sup> he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty.

<sup>54</sup> He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy,

<sup>55</sup> as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever."

**Luke 1:26-55 (ESV)**

## | PRACTICAL

- The supernatural gift of carrying and giving birth to God's Son meant Mary would be ostracized as an unwed mother; she would be a girl in desperate circumstances. But God gave Mary the grace to do what He was calling her to do.
  - God's invitation to become a part of His plan always intrudes into our own plans, as it did for Mary and Joseph, for Zechariah and Elizabeth...
  - but He gives us, like them, the grace to walk through it all in fellowship with Him.
- We find joy in accepting this invitation because Jesus is the centerpiece of God's plan, and the centerpiece of true joy.
- If you're a Christ-follower, it's only because God called you to participate in His story.
  - One way we can participate in God's story is to do what Jesus came to do and what He calls all His followers to do: invite others into His story as well!
  - One way we can invite others into His story is to invite others to church with us.

## | REFLECT

- What do you see as significant in the fact that Mary referred to the child in her womb as “God my Savior,” not “my son?”
- Mary praised God because He resists the proud but gives grace to the humble. Why do you think this is such a common theme throughout the Bible?
- Mary’s response, “Let it be to me according to your word” is her way of saying “Yes” to Jesus. How is He inviting you to say “Yes” to Him today?
- God is not only the Promise Maker, but He is the Promise Keeper—and all His promises are fulfilled in Jesus.

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