




# The Annunciation

CHRISTMAS ACCORDING TO LUKE #1 - Pastor Gary Combs - December 7, 2025 - Luke 1:26-38

**INTRO:** Good morning church! Today, we're beginning a new 4-week sermon series called CHRISTMAS ACCORDING TO LUKE.

**VISION:** But before we begin, allow me to talk about how important this Christmas season is to our goal of saturating our city with the gospel. You see, this season is the most likely time of the year for our lost friends and family to accept an invitation to attend church with us. That's why I'm asking you to do three important things:

1. **Take those two "Christmas At Eastgate" invite cards** and give them to the people you've praying for, that you've put their names on the It's Time cards down here at the altar and invite them to church on December 21st. I promise we will offer the most beautiful and clear presentation of the gospel we can that day. 
2. **Sign-up to fill one of our volunteer roles on December 21st.** We're expecting over 600 attendees that day and we won't every member helping to serve them, so they can clearly hear and respond to the gospel. Follow this QR code to sign-up. 
3. **Prepare to give your most generous special offering on December 21st** for our annual Christmas Missions Offering. This offering goes to support our international missions partners. This year, among other things, we hope to help the Castros purchase a vehicle for their church planting work in Mexico. After all, it is Jesus' birthday. And what does He want? He wants His gospel to go out to the whole world! 

Thanks in advance for your partnership in getting the gospel out to our city and to our world!

**Now, let's turn our attention to the gospel of Luke in a message we've entitled THE ANNUNCIATION.** What's an "annunciation" you ask? It's just a big word for "announcement." Because in our Luke reading today, we'll see how the angel Gabriel appears to Mary to announce to her that she'll be giving birth to God's Son, Jesus!

**ILL:** Have you seen some of these funny birth announcements that people mail out and post on social media?



**Trans:** Birth announcements can be humorous. After all, for most it's one of life's most joyous moments. Yet, for Mary, it took a while for the joy to come. Her first response was one of fear and then one of confusion. For her announcement didn't come in the mail, nor did she see it on social media, her's came via an angel and besides that she was probably only 13 or 14 years old, newly betrothed, and had never been with a man. This was serious.

**Need:** And like Mary, many of us struggle to understand that God wants to do something significant in our lives. We look at our resumes, our past mistakes, or our current limitations, and we think, "God couldn't possibly use me. I'm nothing special." We tend to think God's favor is something we have to earn, achieve, or qualify for. We need to know today that God's activity in our lives isn't based on our performance, but on His unmerited favor. If we miss this, we miss the heart of the Gospel.

**Trans:** Luke's account shows us a different way. It shows us that God breaks into ordinary history to reveal His extraordinary, unmerited grace to ordinary people.

**BODY:** In the gospel according to Luke, he recorded how the angel Gabriel announced God's gracious favor to Mary, revealing the miraculous conception of God's Son and assuring her through God's Word and power so that she might respond in faithful submission. In this announcement to Mary, we can see how God has revealed His unmerited favor to us. How has God revealed His unmerited favor to us? Luke's account of the Annunciation reveals **four ways** God has revealed His unmerited favor to us.

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**Read text:** Luke 1:26-38 (ESV) <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[*e*] of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

## GOD HAS REVEALED HIS UNMERITED FAVOR TO US ...

### 1. By the announcement of His grace.

**EXP:** (26-30) Notice how Gabriel greets Mary in v.28: "Greetings, O favored one." In the Greek, this word *charitoō* means to be endowed with special honor or to be accepted. Same root as the word for "Grace."

**"O favored one" (28)** (χαριτώ, *charitōō*) - to make graceful; to pursue with grace, compass with favor

**"Sixth month" (26; 36)** (ἕκτος, *hektos*) - both verses refer to the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy. The angel Gabriel visited Mary in the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, which was just before Mary conceived the baby Jesus.

**"Gabriel" (26)** (Γαβριήλ, *gabriēl*) - man of God, strong man, hero of God. Gabriel appeared Daniel 8-9, then to Zechariah in Luke 1, and then to Mary in Luke 1. "Gabriel's interactions... highlight his role in revealing God's plans and preparing His people for significant events." (*Topical Encyclopedia*)

**"Virgin" (27)** (παρθένος, *parthenos*) - a maiden; an unmarried daughter, a virgin. As Isaiah prophesied:

Isaiah 7:14 (ESV) "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." Which means "God with us."

**"Betrothed" (27)** (μνηστεύω, *mnēsteuō*) - promised in marriage, betrothed. "In first-century Jewish tradition, betrothal (*Erusin*) was the first stage of marriage and was a legally binding covenant that rendered the couple husband and wife, dissolvable only by death or formal divorce. The groom would then spend a separation period of up to a year preparing a home for his bride before returning to finalize the marriage with the wedding ceremony (*Nissuin*). The common age for a girl to become legally betrothed was 12 or 13. Rabbinic texts recommended 18 years old as the ideal age for a man to marry." (*Gemini*)

**"Joseph of the house of David" (27)** - It clarifies that while Jesus gets His humanity from Mary and His deity from the Holy Spirit, He gets His royal credentials via Joseph. This is in "fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant God promised King David in 2 Samuel 7:12-16 that his offspring would rule forever" (*Bible Project*).

**"Greatly troubled" (29)** (διαταράσσω, *diatarassō*) - to agitate greatly, trouble greatly; to disturb

**ARG:** Both God's grace and the faith to receive it are a gift from God.

Ephesians 2:8-9 (ESV) <sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

The Apostle Paul reminds us that this is how God operates with all of us. Just as Mary was a recipient of favor she didn't earn, we are recipients of salvation we didn't deserve.

**ILL:** Imagine winning a prestigious award—like a Nobel Prize or an Olympic Gold Medal—but you never entered the contest, never ran the race, and never studied the science. They just showed up at your door and said, "Here, this belongs to you now." That confusion you would feel? That's what Mary felt. "Why me?" The answer is simply: Grace. It reminds me of that old Kris Kristofferson song, "Why Me Lord?"

**APP:** Stop trying to earn God's love. Some of you are exhausted today because you are on a treadmill of performance, trying to be "good enough" for God. The lesson of the Annunciation is that God comes to the humble, the ordinary, and the low-status, and He pours out His favor. Will you accept His grace today, or will you keep trying to earn a wage Jesus has already paid?

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## 2. By the advent of His Son.

**EXP:** (31-33) God reveals His favor by telling us who is coming. Look at the description of this child in vv. 31-33. His name will be Jesus ("Yahweh saves"). This isn't just a baby announcement; this is the fulfillment of centuries of prophecy. God shows us favor by sending us exactly who we needed: a King to rule us and a Savior to rescue us.

"Jesus" (31) (Ἰησοῦς, *iēsous*) - "Yahweh saves!" Jesus, the Son of God, the Savior, God incarnate.

"Great" (32) (μέγας, *megas*) - great, greatness of rank, of power, of excellence.

"The Son of the Most High" (32) (ὑψιστος, *hupsistos*) - highest, most high; of rank: the most high God

"Throne of his father David" (32) - Jesus is given the throne of His father David both legally through his father Joseph (see Matthew 1) and biologically through his mother Mary (see Luke 3).

"His kingdom there will be no end" (33) (τέλος, *telos*) - eternal; that by which a thing is finished

**ARG:** This was according to God's promise to David. Mary would've known this promise of Messiah.

2 Samuel 7:12-13 (NKJV) <sup>12</sup> "When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. <sup>13</sup> He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.

**APP:** Is Jesus the King of your life today? Gabriel said, "of his kingdom there will be no end." Every other kingdom fades. Only His kingdom lasts. Have you recognized Him as King?

## 3. By the assurance of His power.

**EXP:** (34-37) Mary asks a very practical question in verse 34: "How will this be?" It wasn't a question of unbelief (like Zechariah's), but of biology. She was a virgin. Gabriel gives her the assurance of God's power.

"Overshadow" (35) (ἐπισκιάζω, *episkiazō*) - to envelop in a haze or cloud of brilliancy; overshadow.

"Holy" (35) (ἅγιος, *hagios*) - sacred, consecrated, set apart, holy— pure, morally blameless.

"Relative Elizabeth" (36) (συγγενής, *syngenēs*) - relative, cousin, kin. Also, wife of the Levite priest, Zechariah and future mother of John the Baptist.

"Barren" (36) (στεῖρα, *steira*) - barren; of woman who does not conceive. Origin of the word "sterile."

"Impossible" (37) (ἀδυνατέω, *adunateō*) - lacking strength, impossible. Nothing is impossible with God.

**ARG:** The prophet Jeremiah echoes this truth of God's power:

Jeremiah 32:17 (NKJV) Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. There is nothing too hard for You.

**ILL:** The word Gabriel uses for "overshadow" is the same concept used in the OT for the cloud of God's glory resting on the Tabernacle. The Ark was also overshadowed by the cloud of glory. (Ex. 25) This is why early Christians saw Mary as a kind of Ark: The Ark carried the written Word. Mary carried the incarnate Word. Today, God wants to do more than overshadow you. He wants to abide in you by the Spirit of Christ Jesus.

**APP:** Whatever impossible situation you face today—broken relationships, prodigal children, medical diagnoses, financial mountains—remember this truth: The God who brought His Son into the world through a virgin's womb is able. Trust Him to do what only He can do.

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## 4. By the affirmation of His Word.

**EXP:** (38) Finally, we see the climax of the passage. How does Mary respond to this unmerited favor, this impossible calling, and this disruption of her life? She affirms God's Word. She says, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." Or as in the KJV: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word." This was a dangerous response. It meant scandal. It meant Joseph might leave her. It meant social suicide. But she trusted God's Word more than her own fears.

"God of peace" (20) (εἰρήνη, *eirēnē*) -

**ARG:** After witnessing Jesus heal a mute and setting him free from a demon, a woman cried out:

Luke 11:27-28 (ESV) <sup>27</sup> As he said these things, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to him, "Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts at which you nursed!" <sup>28</sup> But he said, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!"

But Jesus redirected her attention from His mother, to His Word. We cannot experience the fullness of God's unmerited favor until we surrender our will completely to His Word.

**ILL:** It's like signing a blank check and handing it to God. Most of us want to fill in the amount, the date, and the recipient, and then ask God to sign the bottom. Mary signed the bottom of the check and let God fill in the details. She said, "I am your servant." Whatever that means, whatever it costs, I'm in.

**APP:** What is God asking of you today? Maybe He's calling you to serve in a new way, to forgive someone who hurt you, or to give generously this Christmas. Are you arguing with Him, or are you saying, "Let it be to me according to your word"? The path to experiencing God's favor is the path of surrender.

**CONCLUSION:** The Scripture concludes with "the angel departed," but the reality of God's favor remained. Mary carried the Savior of the world. Mary's story is ultimately our story.

- 1) God has announced His grace to us.
- 2) He has given us His Son.
- 3) He assures us of His power.
- 4) And He affirms His promises through His Word.

Today, that same unmerited favor announced to Mary is offered to you.

Not because you are good, but because God is gracious.

God has revealed His favor. King Jesus has arrived. His power is assured. The only question left is your response. Will you say, like Mary, "I am the servant of the Lord"?

Let's pray.