

Christmas Part 1: Experiencing Christmas for the First Time

Luke 1:26-38



Luke 1:26-38 Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called 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 coming in, he said to

her, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." 29 But she was very perplexed at this statement, and was pondering what kind of greeting this was. 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 name Him 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 and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and there will be no end of His kingdom." 34 But Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?" 35 The angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God. 36 And behold, your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren. 37 For nothing will be impossible with God." 38 And Mary said, "Behold, the slave of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

1) Experiencing Christmas Begins with the Favor of God the Father. The first thing Mary learns about what will be the very first Christmas is through Gabriel's greeting that she has found favor with God. This favor is described as both an element of who she is and of what God the Father is going to do in her life. In Mary's day, God's favor was found in

Abraham. In our day, God's favor is found in Christ. After the birth of Jesus, God has extended His favor to all of mankind by sending His Son so that whoever believes in Him may be saved. We do not need to wait for an angel to come into our life and tell us that we have found favor with God. Rather, when Jesus came into the world on the first Christmas, this was God the Father declaring that His favor has been extended to all of humanity.

2) Experiencing Christmas Comes from the Belief In God The Son. After greeting Mary, Gabriel tells Mary that she will give birth to Jesus and then describes who Jesus will be. Mary was first introduced to Jesus by Gabriel and discovered that Jesus would be the Messiah foretold and the Son of the Living God. Though she was confused at first, she found peace when she trusted in this truth. In our day, like Mary, we are called by God to believe that Jesus is the Messiah foretold, the Son of God, and that by believing have life in His name. For us to experience Christmas in a way that turns fear to peace and confusion to confidence before God, then all that He requires is that we believe in God the Son.

3) Experiencing Christmas Happens by the Power of God the Holy Spirit. Amidst the encounter between Mary and Gabriel, Mary experiences the whole range of human emotions. There is fear, bewilderment, confusion, and doubt, but all of this is transformed into inspirational faith and obedience by one thing: the Holy Spirit. After Mary asks Gabriel the question of "how", Gabriel tells her this will all come to pass through the power of the Holy Spirit. When a person discovers they have found favor with God in Jesus, and that all God requires of them is to believe in Jesus, then they can know it is through the power of the Holy Spirit that God makes the impossible become a reality in our lives. It is through the power of the Holy Spirit that enables all who believe to experience the full benefit of what Christmas represents in the world today.