



“The Coming King”
Luke 1:26-38

Idea: Jesus is God’s gracious gift to redeem the world.

Intro: Malcolm Tucker’s car just stopped. He did not know what it was or how to fix it. He was in a small southern town, so he hoped to find someone to help. Unfortunately, he could not find anyone who was willing or able to help him. Everything was shut down because it was Sunday. He did find the local sheriff who took him to the local theologian who was named Gomer Pile. He ran a service garage in town. Gomer looked at the car and said to Mr. Tucker, “It might be a gauge problem. She’ll tell ya, it’s on F when you really got an E.”

Gomer’s diagnosis makes a lot of sense, and it is exactly where many people are today. On the outside, we have a sign that reads “full.” We are at full capacity. Our social engagements are full. Our work schedule is full. Our family schedule is full. Our lives are full, but they are empty. Mr. Tucker told Gomer that his car had fuel in it, but the stark reality was that it would not run. You see, it did not matter how the gauge read; the fuel tank was empty, and there are a lot of people running on empty right now. Perhaps, this is your condition today. You are running at full-bore, at full capacity. You want others to be impressed by just how full your life is, but you are as empty as can be.

The Lord Jesus was born into a world just like what I have described. The lives of the Jewish people in Palestine were full. They had full work schedules. They had full family schedules. They had full religious schedules. In fact, one might argue that first-century A.D. was the most religious era in Jewish history. The people were deeply devoted to the Torah and the Mishnah. They anticipated and longed for the promised Messiah. Yet, as they filled their lives and schedules with religious things, darkness continued to settle over them with no glimpse of light on the horizon. When the angel Gabriel visited Zechariah in the Temple, the nation of Israel had been living in darkness for over four hundred years. The people had not heard from a prophet since Malachi. Heaven had been silent during those centuries and the darkness just seemed to grow darker with each passing year.

Thankfully, the story does not end there. Glorious light was beginning to dawn on the horizon. Glimmers of hope were being given. Gabriel had visited Zechariah in the Temple to tell him his wife would give birth to a son who would be the forerunner to the Messiah. Now, six months later Gabriel returns and opens the proverbial door to more light. A young virgin named Mary will give birth to a son whose name will be called Jesus. He will be the coming King who will fill the lives of people with His life-giving light.

[Read Luke 1:26-38.](#)

Inquiry: The Christian faith is a historical faith. It is set in history in a real place with real people. During the Christmas season, we celebrate the historical birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, a village just outside of Jerusalem. For Mary, however, this beautiful story began with Gabriel's announcement in her own hometown of Nazareth. She was from the northern region of Palestine known as Galilee. This region was the subject of abiding Jewish contempt because of its mongrelized population. In fact, those in Judah regarded the Galileans as not being kosher because of their close contacts with Gentiles. Nazareth, especially, had this kind of reputation. It was a shoddy, corrupt halfway stop between the port cities of Tyre and Sidon with a large population of Gentiles and Roman soldiers. In the eyes of the Jews, Nazareth was a "spot-in-the-road," a non-place with a bad reputation. In fact, when Philip was trying to tell his brother about Jesus of Nazareth, Philip's reply was, "*Can anything good come out of Nazareth?*" (John 1:46). Very little was thought of this town.

This young girl named Mary was betrothed to a young man named Joseph. He was "*of the house of David*" (1:27), which is significant in the storyline. Joseph and Mary were engaged; their engagement was stronger than ours today. It could not be broken without a divorce for sexual immorality. They were moving towards marriage but not yet married. Therefore, Luke places great emphasis on the fact she is a virgin. It is an important theological point in the incarnation of Jesus and the redemption He offers.

Mary is visited by Gabriel who announces his presence with a greeting. This visitation was much different than what Zechariah experienced. There in the Temple, Gabriel's greeting to him was an appeal to not fear because Gabriel's glorious presence overwhelmed Zechariah. With Mary, it is as if Gabriel approaches from behind and with a soft voice greets the young lady. She recognizes that he is an angel but is not overwhelmed by his presence. Instead, what grips her is the thought of being considered favored and having the Lord's presence with her. That was unimaginable in her world. It did not make sense. After all, she was an nobody from an unknown town. It is not by chance that the first time we read of Nazareth in the Bible is here with Mary. God is passing over the glory of Jerusalem and the wisdom of the priests to bring His gift to humanity through the humblest of His people.

Gabriel declares that Mary is "*favored.*" This young teenage girl who is unread and inexperienced has the favor of God resting on her. What did Gabriel's announcement mean? Certainly, he did not mean, "Hail Mary full of grace," as the Douay-Rheims Bible translates it. According to Raymond Brown, a Catholic New Testament scholar, this faulty translation from the Latin Vulgate gave rise to the medieval idea that "Mary had every gift, not only spiritual but secular, even above those given to angels." Therefore, the idea of Mary being a dispenser of grace arose, which led to prayers being offered to her. Pius IX (1854) extended this understanding in his addition to the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception by declaring that the Blessed Virgin Mary was kept free from the stain of original sin. No, Mary was not chosen because she was sinless and a dispenser of grace. In God's sovereign grace she was chosen to carry the Redeemer through whom she would need to receive redemption.

Nevertheless, Mary was graced with being the mother of the Lord Jesus. Of the billions of women who have inhabited earth, she was the one whose face Jesus most resembled. For that fact, we must call her blessed. Even though others may think too highly of her, we should not think God is pleased when we think too little of her.

Mary was favored, and Gabriel explains her favored position. She will bear a son. His name will be Jesus. We learn from Matthew's gospel the significance of this name. It means, "Yahweh Saves!" Yes, it was a common name in first-century Palestine, but the Lord Jesus would be the first and only to fulfill the hope of this name. Her son will usher in the kingdom of God and fulfill the hope of Israel.

Of course, this great news is puzzling to Mary, so she wonders how this will happen. Her question was different than Zechariah's. She did not question if God was able to do it but wondered how it would happen. After all, she is a virgin and had never known a man. Her question was biological in nature. It builds on faith. Gabriel explains that she will be overshadowed with the Holy Spirit. This language is used to describe God's

presence in the Temple and on the Mount of Transfiguration. There was no sexual union. Instead, the Holy Spirit's presence would come upon her and coupled the DNA of divinity with the DNA of humanity. He placed in her womb a human body prepared for God the Son.

Gabriel reminded Mary that nothing is impossible with God. As proof, he informed her that her relative who was known by everyone to be barren was in her sixth month of pregnancy. Mary responded with surrender to God's perfect plan. Surely, she had many thoughts going through her mind in that moment of what others would think, say, and do to her. But it did not matter. She submitted herself as the Lord's servant.

This beautiful story came to people who personified full lives. Their gauges read "full." They had Temple worship and ceremonial feasts. They enjoyed the ancestral privilege of being Jews and living in the land of Israel. They possessed the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings. Yet, they were still empty. They needed something more, better yet, Someone more. They needed the coming King.

Today, on the Sunday before Christmas, let's look at this coming King. My prayer is that we will not just have full schedules but a full heart that has been transformed by Jesus. He is God's gracious gift to redeem the world. There are four things to see about Him.

The coming King is...

1. Virgin born. (vs. 27, 31, 34-35)

Isaiah prophesied that the Messiah would be born of a virgin (Is 7:14). Matthew connects this prophesy with the birth of Jesus (Matt 1:23). Luke may very well have Isaiah 7:14 in mind as he writes an accurate history of the life and ministry of Jesus for Theophilus, but he does not mention it. He is simply telling how God will do an unprecedented work through a faithful, young woman. Some people argue that Luke is pointing out how Jesus' birth is greater than that of John's.

I believe there is still more going on in the text, and it relates to the theological idea of redemption. The angel told Joseph in the vision to name the boy Jesus because "*he will save his people from their sins*" (Matt 1:21). The sole purpose for Jesus' coming as Luke will tell us in chapter 19 is to "*seek and save the lost*" (19:10).

How is mankind lost and in need of being found? The answer is the nature of sin that every person bears. It is the result of Adam's sin in the garden. His rebellion against God and His Word has cursed every generation with that same rebellious spirit. Jesus was conceived of the Holy Spirit in Mary's womb. His humanity was not derived from Adam's seed; therefore, He was not born under the curse. He is not the result of fallen and depraved human achievement. No, Jesus is the result of God's divine power overshadowing Mary. Therefore, He was not born with the Adamic sinful nature that you are I were born under. Our natural default is sin and rebellion. This was not true of Jesus. He was not a sinner who learned not to sin. As God's gracious gift, He was sinless and today frees us from our sin.

2. The Son of God. (vs. 32)

Look at verse 32. Gabriel declares Jesus to be the Son of God. Now, we dare not interpret Gabriel's words as referring to Jesus being the creation of God. The language here places the emphasis on Jesus' equality with God the Father. Therefore, we ought to understand Jesus as God the Son. He is coequal with the Father but subordinate in role.

What this means for us pragmatically is that Jesus was not just a great teacher, prophet, or miracle worker. He was not just a martyr who died for a cause. No, Jesus is God the Son in human flesh. He is as Isaiah prophesied, "*God with us*" (Is 7:14). The coming King is God's gracious gift of redemption.

3. The Son of David. (vs. 32)

David's "throne" was emblematic of the messianic kingdom. Gabriel's words were a free interpretation of 2 Samuel 7:8-16 and the Davidic Covenant. God was making clear through the angel His purpose in sending His Son. It was to redeem a people unto Himself. The kingdom of God is about a people in covenant relationship with their Creator/Redeemer.

All throughout the Bible we read how God never abandons humanity regardless of how sinful they may be. He pursued Adam and Eve in the Garden. He called out Abram amid his paganism. He revealed Himself to Moses who had fled his people. David committed terrible atrocities against Bathsheba and Uriah, yet God sent Nathan the prophet to call him to repentance. Even after Judah had been exiled to Babylon because of their sin and continued to refuse to repent, it was God who sent Ezekiel to preach the gospel to them. The same thing is taking place in the first century. God has not abandoned humanity. What we read in Luke's gospel is the crescendo of this salvation history. Everything has been pointing and moving in the direction of the coming King. Jesus is this Savior King who seeks and saves the lost. As God's gracious gift, He pursues broken people and makes them whole. God's messianic kingdom moves forward and welcomes more and more people.

4. Reigning forever. (vs. 33)

God's promise to David was that there would not cease to be a king setting on his throne. Obviously, God meant more than simply an earthly throne. At this point, David's earthly throne had been interrupted. It ceased when Babylon conquered Jerusalem in 586 B.C. There is still no king setting on that throne in Jerusalem. The earthly throne symbolized the spiritual throne of God's messianic kingdom. This kingdom is comprised of all believers who have found life in God through Jesus Christ. One day, however, the earthly throne will be reestablished when Jesus returns to conquer Satan, death, hell, and the grave (Rev 20:7-15).

As those who have been redeemed through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, our redemption is everlasting because the Lord's reign is eternal. Although Jesus may not be setting on the throne physically in Jerusalem today, He reigns, nevertheless. He will set down one day in victory because He is victorious, and we share in His victory. The coming King is God's gracious gift who reigns forever.

Conclusion: Jesus would enter this world among people who were steeped in darkness. Both Jews and Gentiles were extremely religious. They worshiped, prayed, and followed the rules of their religion. Their spiritual activity, however, gave no glimmer of light. The people were busy raising their families and growing their businesses. Many of them worked hard to make life and the conditions in their communities better for others. Their community involvement, unfortunately, did not result in the wholistic transformation they were working toward. Personally, they needed something more. Likewise, the community needed something more. Outward transformation was not enough. Something needed to change on the inside of people.

Light had shone on the Jews for centuries. They possessed the Law. They knew how they were to live as God's covenant people. The prophets had repeatedly called them to obey God's Word. They had also prophesied of a Messiah to come who would remove their heart of stone and replace it with a heart of flesh. This Messiah would change them from the inside out. Light would emanate from within rather than shine on them from outside.

Illustration: Light shining from within a box.

Today, some of you are like the box. Light is shining on you. You might be religious. You strive to be a good person. You are committed to your family. You are a hard worker. You are involved in the community. You support good causes. All these things are important and good. They provide a measure of light in a culture of darkness. They, however, cannot and do not dispel the darkness in one's life. They cannot change a person's

heart. Your life seems to be full, yet you feel so empty. What you need is light shining on the inside. You need Jesus to change your life.

If you have never turned from your sin and placed your faith in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of that sin, the Bible has news you need to hear.

Good news: God loves you. He created you and desires to know you.

Bad news: You are a sinner in rebellion against your Creator.

Best news: God has done everything necessary to justly deal with your sin and bring forgiveness and restoration to your life. Today, He calls you to turn from your sin and self and turn to Him as Savior and Lord. Have you received forgiveness in Christ? What would keep you from embracing the truth and believing on Jesus today?

Christian, how is your walk with the Lord? Is His light shining out through you? If you have put a veil over it and are walking at a guilty distance, Jesus invites you to come home. Cast off anything and everything that hinders His light in your life.

The coming King is God's gracious gift to us. Let's receive Jesus and surrender our lives afresh and anew.