

Act 1 – Who Are You?

“In the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, ²⁷to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. ²⁸The angel went to her and said, “Greetings, you who are highly favoured! The Lord is with you.” ²⁹Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be.” - Luke 1:26-29

In this Series, We Will Learn That...

1. The events preceding the Christmas story are critical to understanding and appreciating the real Christmas story.
2. Jesus must be the focus of Christmas for us to celebrate properly.

The Age

1. The Old Testament had promised a Messiah, but the people had not heard from God in 400 years.

“The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs and the obedience of the nations is his.” - Gen. 49:10

“Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes...” - Daniel 9:25

“I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers; I will put my words in His mouth, and He will tell them everything I command Him.” - Deut. 18:18

“And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning Himself.” - Luke 24:27

2. It is now the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy.

The Angel

1. God sent this angel. This whole story is about God, who initiates a communication with mankind.
2. The angel’s name is Gabriel, one of only two angels named in the Bible.
 - Gabriel is mentioned in four different Bible stories and each time, he is delivering a message.
 - Gabriel stands in God’s presence. (cf. Rev. 8)

“The angel answered, “I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news.” - Luke 1:19

The Address

1. Nazareth — a tiny community.
 - It is never mentioned in the Old Testament.

- It has a poor reputation.

“Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?” Nathanael asked. “Come and see,” said Philip.” - John 1:46

2. In Galilee — The northern portion of Israel.

- It is associated with prophecy.

“...but in the future He will honour Galilee of the Gentiles, by the way of the sea, along the Jordan — - Isaiah 9:1

The Adults

1. Joseph — the name means “may he add” and refers to sons.

- This man was in the line of David.

“...and Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ. ¹⁷Thus there were fourteen generations in all from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to the exile to Babylon, and fourteen from the exile to the Christ.” - Matthew 1:16,17

- This man was “engaged” and was awaiting his wedding day.

2. Mary — the name means “bitter”.

- This woman was a virgin. This word in Greek has only one meaning. (*parthenos*) She was probably very young.

The Announcement

“Hail” or Greetings — means simply, “Hello”.

“Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, “Greetings, Rabbi!” and kissed Him.” - Matthew 26:49

“Favoured one” — (*charitoō*) — means to be fortunate or to be showered with blessings.

(Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum.)

“The Lord is with you” — indicates God’s presence.

“Blessed are you among women” — Among women, she is to be happy, but also seen as fortunate.

- Mary was greatly troubled (shaken) by this announcement!

The Lessons We Learn

1. Sometimes when God is silent, we think that He is not near. Instead, He may be awaiting the right moment.
2. God uses ordinary people and places to accomplish extraordinary things. Most of us are very good candidates to be used by God!
3. We must understand what the Scriptures really say to truly appreciate the Christmas season.

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