

Luke 1b: HG Bishop Youssef

His Grace Bishop Youssef ~ فسوي ابن الالة فاطم • LUKE 1: 26 - 38 ~ Bible Study

Annunciation of the Birth of Christ

²⁶ Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!" ²⁹ But ^[r]when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. ³⁰ Then 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 bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. ³² He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; 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 of His kingdom there will be no end."

- Sixth month
 - Sixth month of the pregnancy of Elizabeth (this sentence follows the one before it)
 - St John the Baptist is 6 months older than Christ
 - The Coptic Synxarion on Paone 29/30 (July 7) celebrates the Nativity of St John
- Mary
 - In Hebrew it is Miriam
- Nazareth
 - An insignificant village of lower Galilee
 - Not mentioned in the Old Testament
 - Not mentioned in any ancient text before the New Testament
 - Not mentioned in Josephus' writings
 - "A city of Galilee named Nazareth" - this kind of language indicates that St Luke is writing to people unfamiliar with Palestine
 - St Mary and St Joseph lived in Nazareth and Christ spent most of His life living in Nazareth - thus, He was called the Nazarene (Matthew 2:23, Mark 1:24)
 - Nazareth means "branch"
 - So when Matthew said "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, 'He shall be called a Nazarene'" he was talking about Isaiah 11:1 "There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots."
- Virginitly of St Mary
 - In Hebrew, the same word is used for "virgin" and "young girl."

- In Greek, "Virgin" is which is different from "young girl."
- When Simeon the Elder was translating the book of Isaiah to Greek for the Septuagint, he read it in Hebrew and didn't know if he should use "virgin" or "young girl" - but upon a revelation from God, he used ("virgin"). And the Evangelists used the same Greek word: .
- Betrothed
 - Betrothal was a ceremony of great importance and usually took place a year before the marriage
 - It is like a civil marriage but without consummation
 - St Matthew calls her "his wife" and this is considered true because she was legally his wife
 - Although Mary was betrothed, she vowed her virginity. She had an agreement with her betrothed that she would remain a virgin... so the betrothal is simply to protect her civil rights.
- Mary is related to Zacharias and Elizabeth
 - Mary has a link to the priestly bloodline because Elizabeth is a direct descendant of Aaron
 - And of course she has a link to the kingly bloodline being a descendant of King David
- Greeting of Archangel Gabriel to St Mary
 - "Rejoice, highly favored *one*, the Lord *is* with you; blessed *are* you among women!"
 - The greeting of the angel to Mary is different from his greeting to Zacharias - she gets an honorary title "highly favored" and "full of grace"
- She was troubled
 - The fact that she was troubled by his greeting is evidence of her humility - "who am I to receive such a greeting?"
- Do not be afraid, Mary for you have found favor with God.
 - Calling her by name signifying that he knows her
 - Do not be afraid - these words carry power
- The Divine Message
 - She will be a mother of a Son
 - The angel is reminding her of the prophecy in Isaiah 7:14 "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel."
 - This Son will be called "Jesus"
 - Jesus (Joshua, Hosea) means "Savior"
 - He will be great
 - This is a fulfillment of the Prophecy by Isaiah
 - "For unto us a Child is born,
Unto us a Son is given;
And the government will be upon His shoulder.
And His name will be called
Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
Of the increase of *His* government and peace
There will be no end,
Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom,
To order it and establish it with judgment and justice

From that time forward, even forever.

The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this." (Isaiah 9:6-7)

- He will be called the Son of the Highest
 - "Highest" was one of the Titles of God the Father
 - Genesis 14:19
 - Mark 5:7
 - Psalm 92:1
 - Psalm 83:18
 - "Son of the Highest" is "Son of God"
 - Peter called Him "You are the Christ, the Son of God"
 - Centurion at the Cross said "this is truly the Son of God"
 - God called Jesus His Son
 - "You are My Son today I have begotten You"
 - "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased"
 - Only-begotten
 - We are all sons of God by adoption
 - But Christ is the only-begotten of the Father
- The Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David.
 - Echoes the promises that God gave to King David (2 Samuel 7:9-16, 2 Samuel 23:5)
 - Even the temporal kingdom of Israel belonged to Christ by hereditary right
 - Promises
 - Abraham: The Messiah would be his Seed
 - Moses: Jesus will be the Prophet (deliver message from God to us... Hebrews 1:1)
 - David: Jesus will be the King and establish the Spiritual Kingdom on earth
 - Joachim, father of St Mary, was a descendant of King David
Anna, mother of St Mary, was a descendant of Aaron
- He will reign over the house of Jacob forever and of His Kingdom, there will be no end
 - forever = spiritual kingdom
 - St Paul in 1 Cor 15 talks about the Kingdom of Christ
 - Christ is ruling now from the day of the Crucifixion, until the Second Coming when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father

³⁴ Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?" ³⁵ And the angel answered and said to her, "*The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.* ³⁶ Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren. ³⁷ For with God nothing will be impossible." ³⁸ Then Mary said, "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

- Perpetual Virginity of St. Mary
 - St. Mary was a virgin before the annunciation
 - She was a virgin during the pregnancy
 - She was a virgin during the birth and labor

- She continued in her virginity even until the day of her death
- If she intended to marry, she wouldn't have said "How can this be?" but rather "When will this be?"
- Why was Zacharias punished, but St Mary was not (although she asked 'How can this be?')
 - St Mary has a legitimate question - how can this be? I have not known a man, I have vowed my virginity...
 - If she was planning to get married, she wouldn't question because she would understand that this was all to take place after her marriage...
 - Never in the history of the world was it heard of that a virgin gave birth
 - Look at her attitude when she got the answer "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word"
 - Zacharias's question - by what sign?
 - This question came from doubt
 - It happened many times in the past that a barren woman gave birth (e.g. Hannah the mother of Samuel), and an elder couple had children (e.g. Abraham and Sarah had Isaac)
- The Holy Spirit will come upon you
 - This conception will be done by the power of the Holy Spirit; it is a divine conception; it is above and beyond our understanding
- The power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God
 - Again using "the Highest" to refer to God the Father
 - Again about "the Son of God"
- Pregnancy of Elizabeth
 - Elizabeth's pregnancy was a deviation from nature because she was barren and old
- With God nothing is impossible
 - Even for a Virgin to be pregnant
- Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word
 - Many Church Fathers believe that at this moment, as soon as she said this word, she became pregnant - because it was not possible for the Incarnation without her will. God respects and sanctifies human freedom
 - Some attack titles that we give St Mary (especially in praises):
 - "The salvation of our father Adam"
 - If we assumed (for sake of discussion) that St Mary said to Gabriel "No, I cannot accept this." God will never impose Himself on a person refusing Him. God wants to give us the gift of salvation - a free gift. St Mary, by accepting the gift of salvation, we call her "the salvation of our father Adam."
 - If there is a very poor family and some godly person wanted to give them a gift of money... or wanted to offer a job. If the father of that family rejected that gift of money, or rejected that job, then the family would continue to be poor. But if the father of that family accepted the job that was offered freely to him, then the children can say to the father "you saved us from hunger and poverty" because he received the gift.
 - St. Mary did not actively save us, but she accepted the free gift of salvation by saying "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word"

- "The new Eve"
 - Our mother Eve became disobedient to God, so the new Eve (St Mary), by her obedience and submission, undid the disobedience of our mother Eve.
 - The first Eve disobeyed God, the second Eve obeyed God
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