

We have been amazed by the miraculous nature of the births of Isaac, Obed, Samuel, and John the Baptist...

Every one of these miracles is ultimately about God and His glory.

Now, this morning we will be looking at the miracle of the birth of Jesus... and maybe you're familiar with it.

But, let us not let familiarity make it seem commonplace.

There is a reason you are familiar with this miracle baby... it is the world's greatest miracle.

C.S. Lewis call it "The Great Miracle." Every other miracle seems small after this one. God became a human baby boy.

The Greatest Miracle that ever happened:

If this truly is God in born in the flesh it is no great wonder that he would heal the sick, raise the dead...

Surely a man could feed 5000, calm the sea, even come back from the dead... if He were God!

The really stunning thing is that this one would die on the cross...

but if this baby did grow to become a man and die... if He were God we would not expect Him to stay dead.

The miracle is that He became flesh and dwelt among us.

Nature of Miracles:

Need (due to pain or promise)

A singular act of God (unpredictable, unprovable)

Followed by an adjustment by God's creation to the working of it's master... *CS Lewis*

Many people have said, "Impossible."

## **1. God does the impossible. 1:26-38**

vss. 26-29 God visits Mary (Mariam)... who we are here introduced to (don't know much about her.)

This is the next stop for the angel Gabriel on his mission.

And, his message to Mary is even more shocking than the message to Zechariah was.

Why does God pick Mary? Don't know.

"engaged" = betrothed... first stage of marriage, bride price has been exchanged (legally owned by Joseph)

About a year later when he can make her a home they will be man and wife. 12-18 yrs. old.

Notice the distance to the destination: God – Nazareth

Notice the degree of humiliation: Eternity -- Peasantry

Salutation (blessing pronounced twice) leads to confusion, pondering... natural in the midst of a miracle!

vss. 30-31 Announcement: Mary will bear the promised Messiah.

"favor" = God's gracious choice, freely bestowed, unasked for... may not be easy, but great blessing.

name him "Jesus" = Matt. 1:21 "for He will save His people from their sins."

vss. 32-33 Prophecy: "megas" = great as only God can be (in OT).

"called Son of the Most High" = deity, like God Himself, the promised Messiah... turning hearts toward God.

"Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David" = An eternal King **Is. 9:6-7**

Mary's question, "How is God going to do this?" (curiosity not skepticism)

"virgin" = lit: know no man (young)

"Holy Spirit" = life giving person of God, breath of life, source of divine power... Gen. 1:2

vs. 35 God placed divinity in Mary's womb... that's why He "shall be called the Son of God."

vs. 36 point: Mary, don't be surprised that God is doing this... consider Elizabeth.

Do you believe this statement? He can do ANYTHING!!!

He can fix the unfixable, heal the unhealable, change the unchangeable, save the unsavable

Remember **Gen. 18:11-14** "Is anything too difficult for the Lord?"

**Luke 18:27** God saves impossible people. (Matt. 19:26 & Mark 10:27)

**Mark 9:23** believe! God changes impossible lives. Do you believe this?

or... Do you look at situations as unfixable, people as unchangeable, God's promises as unkeepable?

Mary believes... "bondslave" = willing servant who does what she's told.

"My it be done to me according to Your Word." = Whatever You say, Lord!

Is this how you respond to God? Are you His willing slave? **Ps. 115:3**

## **2. God blesses those who believe in Him. 1:39-45**

Elizabeth... "filled with the Holy Spirit" = like those prophets, spoke truth.

"blessed" = happy for good reason (not personality) Not because a person is always happy. Not because things are easy!

Mary is blessed... her child is blessed... Elizabeth is blessed (vss. 43-44)... and her child...

vs. 45 "she" = Mary... and any other woman who would believe that God keeps his promises.

A Messiah... her own Salvation...

Why get excited about what God does?

1. What God does includes you... part of the family, meaning, purpose

2. What God does dwarfs you (Savior of the World)... His plans bigger than my plans

3. What God does benefits you (my Savior!)... better than all your plans, even when it doesn't appear so.

Believe in God... and you will recognize His blessing.

### 3. God lifts up the humble who follow Him. 1:46-56

Now it is Mary's turn to marvel at her God... everything she says is a reflection or quotation from the OT Scriptures. Let us consider Mary's song. This is no "I'm gonna have a baby" song.

She is going to have a baby... but, that's not what she is singing about.

There is something going on that is much greater than babies, and Mary knows it!

This is the song of a passionate servant of the Lord... and it is about God!

Remember: Mary is about 16, unmarried, uninsured, pregnant

she is passionately excited to be a part of God's plan... past (vs. 47), present (vs. 46), future (vs. 48).

Not a complaint or a whine. What about you? Do you know that what God does is ALWAYS inconvenient?

Do you know that the harder the calling is, the greater the blessing? Think of what lies ahead for Mary.

Here is what she says about her God...

vs. 46 = **Ps. 34:1-1-7** Do you have any idea how wonderful God is?

It might be that the problem is with you...you don't find your joy in God, appreciate, love God...

Maybe it is because we have too many distractions. Maybe we don't spend much time really thinking about God.

vs. 47 Mary finds her joy in God who is her Savior

She might be worried about what people will think... after all, she's 16, unmarried, and pregnant

She might be concerned about all the unknowns in the future.

She might have been wondering if she is really up to the task, "can I do what God wants me to do?"

But, no, she is thinking about what God is doing... not worrying about herself!

vss. 48-49 Mary is amazed at what God is doing for little her... excited about her place in His plan.

Next, Mary continues to quote from her Scriptures...

this time reflecting on all that God does for those who look to Him for mercy, vindication, food, help, everything!

Consider with Mary the kind of God we look to for all we have:

This is who God is... His character... and it is beautiful. Nobody else really keeps promises. We don't have the ability. God does. God lifts up the humble, hungry, poor... people like Mary. "Those who fear Him..."

vs. 50 Mercy if you fear Him

vs. 51 Has done mighty deeds... verbs (past tense in English) grk. aorist... not "when" but "what."

Things that God is doing that, though they are not yet complete, can be portrayed as past realities.

Scatters those who are arrogant in the thoughts of their heart (they think they do mighty deeds)

vs. 52 Brought down rulers... raised up the humble

His "mercy" is upon them. (vs. 50) Mercy = not getting what you deserve. He works "mighty deeds" for them. (vs. 51)

He "exalts" them. (vs. 52) He fills them with "goodness." (vs. 53) So, we act a little like God at Christmastime.

God crushes the proud, rich, rulers... like Herod. Like people who care little for God but appear successful.

vs. 53 filled the hungry... sent away the rich (did not come to God needy, look to God for their riches)

Now, the mighty deeds look different. One is reminded of Psalm 1, "Not so the wicked."

... from Mary? She's 15... what does she know of this stuff? She's serious about God... and she knows Him.

He turns the values of this world on their head. Jesus will say that the first will be last and the greatest are the least.

"scattered the proud in the thoughts of their heart" = these do not fear God. This is right out of the prophets!

"brought down rulers" = Herod, Romans, whoever... Mary fears them not. Her God is bigger. **Isaiah 40:22-26**

"sent away the rich empty handed" = They think they gain... but no... in the end they have nothing if they do not have God.

vs. 54 Mary recognizes God's Mercy in the coming of His Messiah.

... help to Israel... remembrance of His mercy (much to be forgiven)

Israel has rightfully been under judgment for a very long time... Assyria, Babylon, 400 years with no prophetic word...

They deserved it... but now... mercy is on the way, just as the prophets predicted. God remembered!

vs. 55 Mary remembers God's promises... now 2000 years old!

... just like He said... keeps His word (kept His promises to Abraham)

Abraham's seed would grow to number the stars and the sand.

What? could it be that Mary knows that Israel is blessed to be a blessing? To all nations.

That the promise of the prophets, a Savior for all peoples, is being fulfilled. **Joel 2:25-28a**

She is a 15 year old girl, but already miles ahead of most of the theologians of her day.

Why? She loves God, has been listening to His word, and is unafraid of what is coming because she knows He is in charge!

#### 4. God is worshipped for the wonders He works.

2:1-20

So, now, this most amazing of miracles... this most special baby has been born in the most stunning way...

No other event in all of history has been so significant.

And, who gets the news? Shepherds.

Almost no one knew... except a lonely couple and some Shepherds (who had to work Christmas).

We know from Matthew's account that some pagan magi from far away had also figured it out.

It happened amidst the seemingly important actions of seemingly important people... like all of God's great works.

Decree = order, command made into law... to count people, it would be a hand count.

Census would encompass the whole Roman world... conscription, taxes

And apparently in Syria this was to be just the first count... so there would be a recount. Things have changed little.

Caesar Augustus = Octavian, first Caesar after Julius Caesar, had an interesting rise to power, now known for his peaceful reign.

Quirinius = governor, may not have been an official title, but had administrative authority.

Everyone to his own city = unusual, Why? Jews were generally unwilling subjects, wanted a more accurate count.

It happened that one of these people was Joseph who lived in Galilee... but **Micah 5:2**

So he goes to David's city, not the city he ruled from, but his ancestral city... And Mary goes with him.

No fanfare, no reporters, no proper lodging when they arrived... just what was likely an uncomfortable journey.

A journey that ended in a stable, or cave, or some other place where an animal feeding trough could be found.

For this was the first nursery for the Messiah.

The king was born in a way we do not think kings should be born.

The most important event of the day, year, history... if you had been passing by, you would simply have turned away.

And to who knew of this great event?

In contrast to the child in the feeding trough, shepherds in the field, a mother with a new baby... there is heaven's reaction!

Why an announcement? Heaven could not contain its joy. This event that the world was ignoring was big news in heaven.

If just one angel shows up and announces something to you... its important!

Why to Shepherds? We don't know... they were there. There were shepherds everywhere in Palestine

They were regular people... vs. 10 "for all people" We don't know that they were poor, but certainly they were not rich.

Maybe these Shepherds were looking forward to the coming Messiah

Vs. 9 They were frightened... An angel, the glory of the Lord.

Vs. 10-11 Good news of great joy!

Savior! = came to save us from the penalty, power, presence of sin.

Christ = Not Jesus' last name. Messiah... OT prophesy, expectation

The Lord = He is king over all. **Col. 1:15-17**

Vs. 12 "...a sign unto you..." = and what a sign... regular, humble, unremarkable... announced by angels.

An incredible miracle... that according to the momentary, outward appearances, didn't look like much.

But, it was much!

Vss. 13-14 If ever there was a choir that dwarfed its audience... this was it!

Glory to God

Peace on earth... among men with whom God is pleased (Peace between God and men.)

This is what this child would do... remove the distance and enmity between God and people because of sin!

The Shepherds = they wanted to see Him.

They wanted to see. (vs.15)

They wasted no time. (s. 16)

They told people about Him. (vs. 17-18) They praised God. (vs. 20)

This Christmas season... Ask the Lord to lead you into worship of Him.

Mary = treasured these things, pondered these things in her heart (what you do when something is special to you)

His incarnation, coming into this world is the greatest example of this unbounded power of the Almighty.

The greatest miracle ever points us to the greatest miracle worker... God Himself.