

WHY JESUS? WE NEED A KING

LUKE 1:26-38

This is the first message in our Advent series from Luke's Gospel that we have titled, "Why Jesus?" The passage assigned to me from chapter 1 provides the first answer to that question, "Because we need a King."

You may recall that for the first few hundred years of Israel's existence, they did not have a king. All the nations surrounding them did, but Israel's King was Yahweh their God—the one, true God who is perfectly holy, righteous, just, wise, loving, and good...all the time. Which sounds like the perfect attributes for *the* perfect government, except for a couple of things. Yahweh is invisible, which made His presence mysterious and intimidating. One time Moses asked to see Yahweh's glory, and He told Moses, "I will make all my goodness pass before you, but no man, not even you, can see my face and live" (Ex. 33:18-20).

What's more, Yahweh is inaudible. To be sure, Yahweh used human beings like Moses and Samuel to speak His words and give His instructions and communicate His will, but the people themselves didn't hear His voice, and that added a whole other dimension to the mysterious nature of their king.

But perhaps most challenging was that the Israelites had to keep their distance from their King. Because Yahweh's holiness is such that just being in close proximity to Him would have consumed them. They saw evidence of Him on Mount Sinai when the whole mountain shook and looked as if it was on fire, but they didn't dare go near it. In fact, Yahweh said that if anyone touched the mountain he would die.

An awesome King, certainly, but not exactly an endearing King. And we are told in 1 Samuel 8 that the people of Israel grew tired of this arrangement, so they told Samuel, "Appoint for us a king to judge us like all the nations" (1 Sam. 8:5). Admittedly, they made this demand in part because Samuel was old and his sons were wicked and corrupt and they didn't want them (or trust them) to serve in the same capacity as Samuel. But there was more to it than that. They wanted a king they could see with their eyes and hear with their ears, a king they could get close to and not be afraid of. They wanted a king that was approachable and manageable - a domesticated king.

And as Samuel lamented their demand the LORD said to him, "*Obey the voice of the people in all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them (8:7).*"

And for the next few hundred years, Israel rode a veritable roller coaster of reigns by kings with varying degrees of wisdom, intelligence, integrity, competence, and capability. Suffice it to say, they discovered very quickly that as the king is, so goes the entire kingdom. And while there were a few bright spots because of righteous kings, the vast majority of Israel's experience with a monarchy was disastrous, eventually leading to the destruction of their cities and the dispersion of their citizens.

But God—the God whom they had rejected as their king; the God who knew beforehand that their foolish and fickle earthly kings would lead them to near extinction—graciously preserved them. He did not abandon them or give up on them. In fact, He actually turned their rejection of Him as their king and their insistence on an earthly king into the means by which He would provide for them (and for us) the perfect King.

Even as Israel was experiencing the disastrous consequences of their rejection of Yahweh as their king, He spoke through several of His prophets predicting a day when He would resurrect David's kingdom and appoint a descendent of David to sit on His throne. Only this new Davidic king and kingdom would far surpass David's in terms of its greatness,

glory, power, influence, and longevity.

The people of Israel took these prophecies seriously and thought and talked about them frequently. This king, also known as 'Messiah', was the subject of their prayers, the topic of their conversations, the object of their hopes and dreams.

Which sets the stage for Luke's account in **1:26-33**. *²⁶ In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from 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. And the virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" ²⁹ But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. 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 call his name Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to 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."*

This passage, traditionally referred to as the "Annunciation of Mary," has to be one of the most theologically concentrated portions of Scripture in the entire Bible. Every sentence, indeed, almost every clause, reveals either an impending fulfillment of prophecy or a theological profundity, beginning with the very first statement, "in the sixth month."

This is a reference to something Luke had been describing in the previous verses, where the same angel, Gabriel, appeared to Zechariah, a priest who served in the temple in Jerusalem. Though Zechariah's wife, Elizabeth, was barren, and though by this time they were beyond the age of conceiving children, the angel predicted that through their union Elizabeth would conceive and bear a son, and that they were to call him John. Why is that significant? Elizabeth was Mary's cousin. More importantly, that son born to her and Zechariah would be the forerunner of the prophesied king to whom Mary would give birth. John was also predicted by Isaiah (40:3-5; Matt. 3:1-3), for he would have the important role of preparing the people of Israel for His coming.

It was during the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy that Gabriel was sent by God to an obscure village called Nazareth located in the backwater region of Galilee, a place that had absolutely no historical, political, or cultural prominence...except for one thing. Seven hundred years before Gabriel showed up at Mary's house, Isaiah prophesied that out of this relatively desolate, insignificant region God's glory would be revealed (9:1), and what better way for God to reveal His glory than to actually live there.

Notice the human parents who would raise this king. First, a virgin named Mary, a girl probably no more than fourteen years old engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, with whom she had never been intimate. The importance of Mary and her role in all of this is unparalleled, and we'll talk more about her in a moment, but it was Joseph's ancestral background, not Mary's, that is of importance here. For Joseph was a descendant of David, and the Old Testament prophets made it clear that the promised Messiah, the anticipated king, would come from the royal line of David.

However, other than his ancestry, there was nothing regal about Joseph. In fact, very little is said about him, other than that he was a simple carpenter in a blue-collar town and that he was a man of integrity and faith (Matt. 1:18-25). Yet we can certainly infer that God was pleased with him, for God trusted him to raise His Son.

However, we do not have to infer these things about Mary, for in Gabriel's greeting he calls her, "O favored one" and says, "the Lord is with you." Of course, this greeting, not to mention the appearance of an angel, was troubling and bewildering. So, Gabriel tried to assure her, and then repeated his statement about her favored status with God. That may

be an understatement. For no greater honor, no greater privilege, and no greater responsibility has ever been given to a human being than the one given to this teenage girl. Her body was chosen by God to be the container in which God would implant His divine seed, and the vessel that, for nine months, would carry and nourish God's very Son as He developed from a microscopic seed to an unformed fetus to a fully developed child.

And, notice, who this child, who is to be named Jesus, will be. **Verse 32**, *³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to 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.*"

When Israel insisted that Samuel give them a king to rule over them so they could be like all the other nations, they were essentially demanding that Samuel replace their current king, Yahweh, with someone more approachable, manageable, and down-to-earth. They wanted a *human* king that wasn't invisible, inaudible, intangible, or intimidating.

But other than David and a few others, that didn't work out so well for Israel, simply because these kings *were* human. And human kings, even the best of human kings like David and Solomon, are at times weak, frail, fickle, foolish, selfish, prideful, greedy, jealous, power-hungry, and corruptible. And when these characteristics rear their ugly heads, as they inevitably do, the entire kingdom experiences its devastating consequences. Because as the king is, so goes the kingdom.

Of course, God knew this when Israel made its fateful choice to reject Him as King and replace Him with a human king. God even allowed this. But in His mercy, He didn't give up on His people. He planned and then promised to provide the perfect king so that His kingdom would come and accomplish what He wanted all along—that His will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

But the perfect king could not be just anyone. He had to be someone unique and extraordinary, which brings us back to the text in Luke. *"He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High."* What did Gabriel mean, "Son of the Most High"? I assure you, he meant for Mary to take this literally. And she did. Because she asked in **verse 34**, *³⁴ And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?"*

That's a valid question. For Mary knew that it is a biological impossibility for a child to be conceived without relations between a man and a woman.

But look at **verse 35**. *³⁵ And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God."*

God would provide the perfect King by implanting His seed into a virgin so that the child would be both God *and* man. This, too, was prophesied by Isaiah seven hundred years prior to Gabriel's visit. He said through His prophet Isaiah, *¹⁴ Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel (Isa. 7:14).*

Immanuel means, "God with us," and it is a name that is meant to be taken literally. In the words of John, *"And the Word (referring to Jesus) became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, the glory as of the Only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth"* (John 1:14).

This is God's provision for the perfect King. A Being who is fully God, so that He possesses all the attributes needed to reign in perfect righteousness, and whose reign is eternal and whose kingdom is infinite. Gabriel would say of Jesus' reign, *"The Lord God will give to 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."*

But God's provision for the perfect King is a Being who is also fully human, born of a woman with flesh and bone, with a brain and a heart and lungs, so that we can see Him with our eyes and hear Him with our ears and touch Him with our hands and go near Him without being afraid. To say it another way, God provided a king who is visible, audible, tangible, and approachable. And this, too, is a fulfillment of a seven-hundred-year-old prophecy. Listen to Isaiah.

⁶ For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷ Of the increase of His government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over His kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore.

God miraculously implanting His seed into a virgin is what was necessary for there to be a perfect King, the God-Man, whose reign is eternal and whose kingdom is infinite. Only God could think of such a thing, and only God *could* do such a thing because, **verse 37**, *"Nothing is impossible with God."*

Verse 38 ³⁸ *And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.*

Why Jesus? We need a King. But not just any king. We need a God-Man to be our King.

So, let's get personal. The angel Gabriel explained to Mary (and to us) who this king would be and what kind of a king He would be, and what he said perfectly aligns with the prophets' predictions. He answered the question why this king would be superior to every previous king, not only from David's line, but every human king that's ever lived.

But Gabriel did not explain to Mary (or to us) why we *need* a king. He didn't have to explain this to Mary or to any Jew in the first century, since they lived under Roman occupation and Roman rule and they all sensed a profound need for someone to deliver them and establish a kingdom that was greater and superior to the Roman Empire.

But what about you? Do you think we *need* a king? Do you think *you* need a king?

The foundational principle which gave birth to the United States of America is that we do *not* need a king. When Patrick Henry famously cried out, "Give me liberty or give me death," he was declaring that he would rather die than live under the dictates of King George III. Our founding fathers viewed the British monarchy as a threat to their personal rights and freedoms, among which is the right to self-governance.

So, it's possible, having lived in America, that you don't sense a personal need for a king. If so, I'd like to convince you otherwise in the next few minutes.

To be sure, when we think of kings and kingdoms we tend to think of earthly, political kingdoms. But that is not the kind of king or kingdom Gabriel was referring to in this passage. God's rule and reign is not primarily earthly or political, it is spiritual, and it began long before the earth was even created, for His kingdom is from eternity past. And though God created this world to be a place where His righteous rule would have dominion, our first parents, Adam and Eve, chose to disobey God by succumbing to the lies of God's enemy, Satan.

Because of their fateful choice, Satan became the ruler of this world and was given dominion over the earth realm, including the human race. After they sinned, Adam and Eve were transferred from the kingdom of light (God's kingdom) to the kingdom of darkness (Satan's kingdom). Not only did their natures become permanently corrupted by sin, but they themselves became controlled by Satan—he was now their king and master. And the Bible tells us that every human being is born into the same condition. We are born with a sinful nature, but we are also born into Satan's kingdom. We are, by nature, subjects of his

kingdom.

So, Satan, in a sense, has it easy. Because he doesn't really need to do anything to expand his kingdom. His kingdom expands every time a child is born, because, according to Scripture (Romans 5), the male seed is corrupt, and when it fertilizes an egg so that a human being is conceived, that conception results in another of Satan's offspring.

Thus, the need for a virgin birth for the perfect King. Because God's seed, not a corrupted seed from a male human being, was implanted into the virgin Mary, Jesus was not a progeny of Satan. He was God's Son, and thereby was qualified to be the perfect King of an eternal kingdom.

But, getting back to *you*, because you were conceived by a human male seed, your king at birth is Satan, whether you know it or not. You are, by nature, a subject of his kingdom. And the Bible says that one day Satan and all the subjects of his kingdom will be defeated by the King of righteousness and punished by being thrown into a lake of fire.

Now, hopefully the answer to the question, "Why Jesus? We need a king," makes more sense to you. This is not a question regarding your political ideology or preferences. This is a question of your survival. We need a king to rescue us from the kingdom of darkness and transfer us to the kingdom of light. And that is exactly why God sent King Jesus to this earth. We desperately need Him, and we desperately need to be on His side. Our eternal well-being depends on it.

So, the real question that every human being must answer is: Who is my king? There are only two possibilities—Jesus or Satan. Of which kingdom am I a subject? There are only two possibilities—the kingdom of light or the kingdom of darkness.

Please understand that your default king is Satan, and your default kingdom is the kingdom of darkness. If you want, as the Apostle Paul said, to be transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light (Col. 1:13); if you want to be on King Jesus' side—the winning side—then you must receive him. The Bible says, ¹² *But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God (John 1:12).*

You must believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. You must believe that He is God's provision for the perfect King. And you must give your allegiance to Him.

Why Jesus? We Need a King

Luke 1:26-38

Main Idea: God's heavenly messenger (Gabriel) informed a virgin from Nazareth (Mary) that she would, by the Holy Spirit, conceive God's son (Jesus) who would be the promised King whose reign is eternal and whose kingdom is infinite.

Gabriel's message to Mary (26-33)

The messenger: A high ranking angel from heaven (26a)

The place: An obscure backwater village in Galilee (26b)

The recipient: A virgin engaged to a descendent of King David (27)

The greeting: "O favored one..." (28)

The response: Fear and perplexity (29)

The content: (30-33)

God is pleased with you (30)

You will conceive and bear a son (31-33)

You will call Him 'Jesus' (31b)

He will great and called the Son of the most High God (32a)

He will be the anticipated King (32b-33)
from the ancestry of David

who will reign forever

whose kingdom will have no end

Mary's bewilderment—a biological impossibility (34)

Gabriel's explanation (35-36)

How the impossible will be possible (35-36)

The Child will be conceived by the Holy Spirit

Resulting in a 'holy one' called 'the Son of God'

Nothing is impossible with God (i.e. Elizabeth) (36-37)

Mary's willingness (38)