

# Jesus, the Deliverer, Is Born

**SESSION IN A SENTENCE:** Mary trusted God and worshiped Him for His gracious provision of Jesus, the promised King, Savior, and Servant.

**BACKGROUND PASSAGES:** Luke 1:26-38,46-56; 2:1-7

“God is always doing 10,000 things in your life, and you may be aware of three of them.”<sup>1</sup>  
—John Piper

**?** How have you seen in hindsight that God has worked “10,000 things” behind the scenes of your life to accomplish His good purposes?

This simple statement could not be truer than in regard to Jesus’ first coming as a baby. At that time, God had been silent for centuries. His people could not see what God was doing behind the scenes. Doubt most likely prevailed in many Jewish hearts over whether or not rescue would ever come. But our sovereign Lord was continually at work through rulers, cultures, and ordinary people to bring His perfect will to pass. And He still is.

# Group Time

## Point 1: Jesus was born to be the promised eternal King (Luke 1:26-33).

<sup>26</sup> In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, <sup>27</sup> to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup> And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" <sup>29</sup> But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. <sup>30</sup> And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup> And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. <sup>32</sup> 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, <sup>33</sup> and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

Here in Luke 1 we get a peek into what must have been a great shock: Mary received the extraordinary news from an angel that she, a virgin, would become pregnant with a son, whom she was to name Jesus. This son would be the promised Messiah, the King in the line of David who would reign forever over Israel. Yet this lineage would not be counted through Mary but through Mary's marriage to Joseph, David's descendant.

Gabriel was clear that Jesus was not solely the son of Mary, and of Joseph by adoption; He was, of course, also the very Son of the Most High God. If Jesus were not conceived by the Holy Spirit, He would simply be another son of Adam. Instead, He was conceived and born as the uncorrupted and fully human Son of God. Also as the fully divine Son of God, Jesus did not receive the inborn sin nature the rest of humankind has inherited from Adam. The miraculous conception in a virgin's womb points to Christ's divine innocence.

**Virgin Birth:** The virgin birth affirms that the \_\_\_\_\_ Son of God took on human \_\_\_\_\_. The virgin birth is significant in that it serves as a reminder of Old Testament prophecies (Isa. 7) while also affirming both the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ.



What are some reasons Christians must affirm, believe, and defend the supernatural conception and virgin birth of Jesus?

## Point 2: Jesus was born to be the promised mighty Savior (Luke 1:51-55).

<sup>51</sup> He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts; <sup>52</sup> he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate; <sup>53</sup> he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty. <sup>54</sup> He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, <sup>55</sup> as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever.”

Sometime after Gabriel’s visit, Mary left Nazareth to visit with Elizabeth, who herself was a testament to God’s power to do the impossible (Luke 1:36-37). After arriving and being blessed by Elizabeth, Mary proclaimed what is called “the Magnificat” (vv. 46-56), Mary’s celebration of God’s grace. So certain was she of God’s faithfulness and power that she sang of His works in the past tense. God’s plan is unstoppable. God’s power is without fail. God’s will is as good as complete.



When you find yourself in a difficult, unstable season of life, how can the reality of God’s sovereignty and power help you endure faithfully?

Mary not only rightly declared that our Savior’s might is unstoppable, she also shared a glimpse of the table-turning that Jesus would bring. The Jews had been awaiting the Messiah for centuries; they were waiting and watching for the outstretched arm of their Deliverer, but no one predicted what was about to take place. Their Messiah was about to uproot the social structure, upend the establishment’s expectations, and inaugurate an upside-down kingdom, where the last will become first and the first will become last. In this Jesus would demonstrate His great mercy and grace to save lowly sinners.



Why is our merciful Savior better than just a powerful one?



### Voices from Church History

“By this all merit and presumption are laid low, and the pure grace and mercy of God are exalted. For God did not accept Israel on account of its merits but because of his own promise. Out of pure grace he made the promise, and out of pure grace he fulfilled it ... And so the Mother of God praises and exalts this promise above everything and ascribes this work of the incarnation of God to the divine, gracious, unearned promise alone, which he gave to Abraham.”<sup>2</sup>

—Martin Luther (1483-1546)

### Point 3: Jesus was born to be the promised humble Servant (Luke 2:4-7).

<sup>4</sup> And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, <sup>5</sup> to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. <sup>6</sup> And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. <sup>7</sup> And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

The God of the universe, the One who spoke the heavens and the earth into being, the One through whom all things were made and who holds all things together—the very source of life—**condescended** to us by becoming human in order to redeem the world. This was not patronizing but obedient identification with His image bearers. He set aside perfect comfort and pleasures and all-encompassing rights and privileges to be with us as one of us in order to save us.



What are some positive examples of condescension that you have witnessed or experienced?

God the Son's initial condescension in the incarnation led to a life of continual surrender and sacrifice. Though Jesus was deserving of all dedication, He came to serve, not to be served (Mark 10:45). Just as He began His journey on earth, with humility and surrender, Jesus chose submission and self-sacrifice as He neared the end of it to take upon Himself our **deserved condemnation**. He followed God's will to the cross, leading to salvation for all who would trust in Him.

**Christ's Humiliation:** Although God the Son was \_\_\_\_\_ with God and worthy of all the glory God receives, He chose to \_\_\_\_\_ Himself by taking on human flesh. He left His glorious state and came in the \_\_\_\_\_ of sinful flesh, and He experienced a humiliating death on a cross by becoming sin for us so that in Him we might become the \_\_\_\_\_ of God.



# Daily Study

## Day 1: Read Luke 1:26-33

In the angel Gabriel's greeting to Mary, he calls her "favored one," which holds the connotation of someone receiving grace. In verse 30, Gabriel elaborates on this point and tells Mary that she has found favor, specifically with God. She—an ordinary girl—had been handpicked by God to bring about His will. We can see this pattern again and again in the history of God's covenant people. God chooses an ordinary person through whom to do His extraordinary work. Noah, Sarai and Abram, Joseph, Moses, Aaron and Miriam, Ruth, Joshua, Rahab . . . the list goes on. Before they were the so-called heroes of faith we know them to be, they were "simple Joes" and "plain Janes." But God saw fit to use them just as they were, just where they were.

God is still appointing everyday people to carry out His perfect will. We might not always understand it, because we humans tend to make a mess of things, but God can and will use anyone who will say yes to His call.



Spend some time looking back on your life, looking for the evidence of God's gracious hand upon your life. What ministry do you think He has handpicked you for?

## Day 2: Read Luke 1:34-38

We know very little about Mary from this passage, beyond that she is a betrothed virgin. Cultural studies tell us that she probably would have been in her early teens. Imagine with me, young Mary, who more than likely had recently entered womanhood, received the news that she would become pregnant by the very Spirit of God. I'm not sure the typical response of a teenage girl, even during this period in history, would have been as gracious as hers. Yet she received this news, as shocking and nonsensical as it was, with submission and surrender: "And Mary said, 'Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word'" (Luke 1:38).




How would you describe your posture toward the Word of God in comparison to Mary's response to God's call on her life?

### Day 3: Read Luke 1:39-45

At the end of this passage, Elizabeth declares Mary as “blessed.” This word is the same used in the Beatitudes in Matthew 5. “Blessed” as it is used here by Elizabeth, as well as by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, is a declaration over the person spoken of: “Blessed are the poor in spirit ... Blessed are those who mourn ... Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake.” The common denominator of all whom Jesus called blessed is that their faith was in what was to come (see Matt. 5:3-4,10). They had reason to rejoice because the kingdom of heaven, eternal comfort, and great rewards awaited them in their future destiny with God.

Likewise, Mary was declared blessed for her faith, her belief in a gracious God who had come to save His people in such an impossible way. She believed that though she stared at uncertainties and improbabilities, God would take care of her every step of the way. The “blessed” one is the one who believes that the Lord will fulfill what He has spoken. He is faithful. He is able. He is with us every step of the way.

 Are you trusting in God as your faithful provider, regardless of what your current reality is screaming?

### Day 4: Read Luke 1:46-56

I’m not a particularly emotive person. I tend to be fairly even-keeled. One day, as a young adult, a roommate of mine burst in the house with good news to share. Beaming from ear-to-ear, she shared her exciting news with me. I too was excited to hear it! However, my stoic nature tempered the excitement level, leaving me with a simple, small “Great!” as a response. My bubbly roommate was not satisfied with my lackluster reply. She grabbed me by the shoulders, stomped her foot, and demanded that I get more excited.


She was right. The news she shared warranted a much greater response than I was able to give at the time. I look back on that moment often and have since attempted to overcome my lack of expressing emotion with more appropriate responses. This Bible passage is a perfect example of an appropriate reaction to really good news. Our Almighty God has done great things for us. May generation to generation proclaim His fame!

 In what ways does your expressiveness in worship, both public and private, need to change?

## Day 5: Read Luke 2:1-7

As the next generation gets older and our society drifts faster and faster away from any semblance of biblical morality, we can't help but worry. The thought of what our kids will face when they step out into this world is understandably paralyzing to some parents.

In this passage, we see names of rulers and references to a time long ago, a time where God was orchestrating His perfect will through leaders who had no thought for the kingdom of God, places where wickedness reigned. Ours is not the first culture to crumble, and it won't be the last. God is the supreme ruler and authority, and He can bring His will to pass even in a wicked and depraved culture.


 What aspects of our culture make you worry the most, and in what ways can you overcome worry by trusting God's sovereignty and wisdom?


## Encourage One Another


*Join together with 2-4 people from your group, or with your family, sometime during the week to reflect on the session and to share how God is working and you are responding.*

Share your thoughts and reflections on the truths from Scripture in this session:

- Jesus was born to be the promised eternal King (Luke 1:26-33).
- Jesus was born to be the promised mighty Savior (Luke 1:51-55).
- Jesus was born to be the promised humble Servant (Luke 2:4-7).

 How have you responded to these truths from Scripture?

 What can we do to instill confidence among one another in God's faithfulness on the basis of His promises having come to pass in Jesus?

 Why is it important to remember that each of us is a subject under King Jesus' dominion, along with its implications for our relationships?



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### Trevin Wax

General Editor—*The Gospel Project*  
AUTHOR OF MULTIPLE BOOKS, INCLUDING  
*This Is Our Time: Everyday Myths in  
Light of the Gospel*

With this volume of *The Gospel Project*, the storyline of the Bible shifts from the Old Testament to the New, and we enter the era in which God begins to fulfill His promise of salvation through the person and work of Jesus Christ. In the sessions that follow, you'll take a closer look at the context surrounding the birth of Jesus, the theological parallels between Adam and Jesus (the last Adam), as well as the early ministry of Jesus.

Some of these stories will be familiar to you and the rest of your group—the Christmas story, for example, or the story of Jesus' temptation. In the familiar stories, we want to help you see aspects of the Gospel accounts that you may have overlooked. In the less familiar stories, we want to help you see the beauty of Jesus' interaction with all kinds of people with all kinds of needs and all kinds of backgrounds.

Our hope as you study the Scriptures is that you will be drawn to worship Jesus as the Savior and Lord who fulfills God's original intention for us as His people. Here we see a Jesus withstanding temptation, calling disciples, loving the unlovable, and battling the evil one. May your worship of this Savior lead you to faithful obedience to His call in extending grace and mercy and the message of salvation to those around you.

## UNIT 19

## SESSION 1

1. "Sin," in *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, gen. eds. Leland Ryken, James C. Wilhoit, and Tremper Longman III (IVP, 1998) [Wordsearch].
2. Warren W. Wiersbe, *Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the New Testament* (Colorado Springs, CO: Victor Books, 1992), 376.
3. Chrysostom, Homilies on Romans 10, quoted in *Romans*, ed. Gerald Bray, vol. VI in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2001) [Wordsearch].

## SESSION 2

1. Thabiti Anyabwile, *Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus in Luke* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2018), 40-41.
2. Jen Wilkin, *In His Image* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018), 107.

## SESSION 3

1. John Piper, "God Is Always Doing 10,000 Things in Your Life," *Desiring God*, January 1, 2013, [www.desiringgod.org/articles/god-is-always-doing-10000-things-in-your-life](http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/god-is-always-doing-10000-things-in-your-life).
2. Martin Luther, *The Magnificat*, quoted in *Luke*, ed. Beth Kreitzer, vol. 3 in *Reformation Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2015) [Wordsearch].
3. Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2013), 690.

## SESSION 4

1. C. S. Lewis, *God in the Dock*, ed. Walter Hooper (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1970), 168.
2. Thomas Becon, *The Sermon of Simeon in the Temple*, quoted in *Luke*, ed. Beth Kreitzer, vol. 3 in *Reformation Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2015) [Wordsearch].

## SESSION 5

1. Bernard Gilpin, *A Sermon Preached in the Court at Greenewich*, quoted in *Luke*, ed. Beth Kreitzer, vol. 3 in *Reformation Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2015) [Wordsearch].
2. Gloria Furman, *Missional Motherhood* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 200.

## UNIT 20

## SESSION 1

1. Eric Mason, *Manhood Restored* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2013), 1.
2. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, trans. John W. Doberstein (SCM Press, 2015), 91.

## EASTER SESSION

1. Basil, *On Humility* 20, quoted in 1-2 *Corinthians*, ed. Gerald Bray, vol. VII in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2001) [Wordsearch].
2. Russell D. Moore, *Tempted and Tried: Temptation and the Triumph of Christ* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 75.

## SESSION 2

1. Jackie Hill Perry, *Gay Girl, Good God* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2018), 171.
2. Martin Luther, *The Large Catechism*, trans. Robert H. Fischer (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1959), 9.

## SESSION 3

1. Trip Lee, *Rise: Get Up and Live in God's Great Story* (Nashville, TN: Nelson Books, 2015), 47.
2. Ambrose, *Concerning Repentance* 1.12.53, quoted in *John 1-10*, ed. Joel C. Elowsky, vol. IVa in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2001) [Wordsearch].

## SESSION 4

1. Chrysostom, *Homilies on Romans* 14.44, quoted in *Romans*, ed. Gerald Bray, vol. VI in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2001) [Wordsearch].
2. Jerry Bridges, *31 Days Toward Trusting God* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2013) [eBook].

## UNIT 21

## SESSION 1

1. Fred L. Horton Jr., "Exorcism," in *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2003), 533.
2. Dexter Maben, "Mark," in *South Asia Bible Commentary*, gen. ed. Brian Wintle (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 1290.
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4. Dacher Keltner, "Hands On Research: The Science of Touch," *Greater Good Magazine*, September 29, 2010, [http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/hands\\_on\\_research](http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/hands_on_research).

## SESSION 2

1. See *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, by C. S. Lewis (New York: HarperCollins, 1978), 89.
2. St. Athanasius, *On the Incarnation*, trans. and ed. A Religious of C.S.M.V. (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1996), 35.
3. Kim Cash Tate, "Rejected by Friends, Loved by Jesus," *Desiring God*, December 29, 2015, [www.desiringgod.org/articles/rejected-by-friends-loved-by-jesus](http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/rejected-by-friends-loved-by-jesus).

## SESSION 3

1. "Kawasaki Disease and Heart Transplant: Kendall's Story," Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, April 2012, [www.chop.edu/stories/kawasaki-disease-and-heart-transplant-kendalls-story](http://www.chop.edu/stories/kawasaki-disease-and-heart-transplant-kendalls-story).
2. Andrew Murray, *Humility, in Humility and Absolute Surrender* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2005), 42.
3. "John," in *Africa Study Bible* (Oasis International LTD, 2016), 1534.

## SESSION 4

1. Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Commentary on John* 24.23-24, quoted in *John 1-10*, ed. Joel C. Elowsky, vol. IVa in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2001) [Wordsearch].
2. Samuel Ngewa, "John," in *Africa Bible Commentary*, gen. ed. Tokunboh Adeyemo (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 1286.