

The Church of the Servant King Survey of the Bible Series – Luke

SB_LK1B_Chapter 1:26-45 The Announcement of Christ's Birth

Christ's Birth Announced to Mary (1:26-38)

Luke's account of the announcement of Jesus' birth focuses upon Mary, whereas Matthew's account focused upon Joseph (Matt 1:18-25). As you may recall, Matthew's purpose in writing his Gospel account was to prove that Jesus was the rightful heir to the throne of Israel and his primary audience was Jews. On the other hand, Luke's primary audience is Gentile and Luke emphasizes the humanity of Christ more than other Gospel writers. Details relating to Jesus' birth illustrate Luke's focus upon Jesus' humanity and probably derive from the fact that Luke was a physician. This announcement in Luke parallels God's announcement to Abraham and Sarah in Genesis 18:1-15.

The virgin birth prediction and announcement in these verses should cause us to reflect upon at least two Old Testament passages. First, in Genesis 3:15, we see a prediction of "her Seed" which is a reference to the Messiah Jesus. This conclusion is based upon the fact that throughout the Bible the term "seed" is used as a Messianic term (Num 24:7; Is 6:13)

Obviously, the prediction of a Messiah to Israel was known even to Gentiles. We saw examples of this in our study of Matthew (Matt 8:5-13; 15:21-28) and the Old Testament is full of passages that document the blessing that will be experienced by Gentiles when the Messianic kingdom comes. Therefore, even Gentiles would be interested in the prophecy in verses 32-33 that indicate that this babe Jesus would grow to be the recipient of and fulfill the Davidic Covenant.

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. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end. (Lu 1:32-33)

When your [David] days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. (2 Sa 7:12-13) [This promise finds its ultimate fulfillment in Jesus even though in its immediate context, the reference is to Samuel]

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; **He shall bruise your head**, and you shall bruise His heel. (Ge 3:15)

Therefore, I will give thanks to You, O Lord, **among the Gentiles**, and sing praises to Your name. (Psa 18:49)

Mary's response to this announcement was different than Zacharias. Mary asked "how" this would be fulfilled, i.e. what were the mechanics? Zacharias had asked "How shall I know this?" The focus of Zacharias' question was not upon the mechanics, but upon how he could believe such a pronouncement. These are two entirely different things and no doubt reflect a difference in faith in the angel's pronouncement. Mary did not ask for a sign, but Zacharias did.

Evidently, not until later in her life did Mary and others make the connection between Isaiah 7:14 and the birth of Jesus. This is most likely due to the fact that Isaiah 7:14 had an immediate fulfillment in the fact that Isaiah's wife (a young woman – virgin) in Isaiah 8:3 would bear a son as a sign to the nation that it would have a remnant even after Assyrian conquest. The son's name in that historical setting was Maher-Shalal-HashBaz which meant "speed the spoil, hasten the booty". This view is bolstered by the fact that

Isaiah described his children as signs to the nation (Is 8:18) and he delivered a similar prophecy for his son (Is 7:16 cf. 8:4).