

Son of God
Luke 1:26-38

Christmas is soon upon us and among all the different Christmas decorations, we see a lot of manger scenes and images of the baby Jesus. (picture) He's cute and cuddly, all wrapped up in swaddling clothes and laying in a manger. In those images he's tiny and helpless like every other baby, but this morning I want us to ponder the power that was in him.

This is the propeller from my boat motor – a small, simple metal object that I can easily carry with one hand. It doesn't look all that powerful or amazing, but if you attach it to the bottom of my boat motor, you will find that it actually has the power to thrust my heavy, 18' aluminum fishing boat forward so fast that it glides across the water at 30 mph, even with 3 people on board! I have a hard time just moving my boat a few feet by hand when it's on the trailer in my garage. I have to strain to get it in place, especially if I'm pushing it up any kind of incline. But this tiny propeller can push it forward without any problem. If you aren't familiar with propellers and how they work, you'd never know that something so small could be so powerful.

The same is true of a baby. When you look at a tiny baby, you usually think about how small and helpless they are. You forget how little they can be. And yet a baby has a lot of power. I remember when Sophia was born. (picture) A tiny baby girl. She weighed in at 6lbs, 2 oz. and measured just over 20 inches long. She was cute and cuddly, but that tiny baby had the power to change our lives forever. The same is true of every baby.

But there's one whose power is infinitely greater than all the rest. He had the power not only to change his parents' lives, but also to change the course of human history, to carry out God's eternal plans and decrees, and to secure eternal salvation for you and me and millions of other people around the world.

Today we're going to look at what made Jesus different than all other babies and why he had such great power. I decided to stay in Luke for these Christmas sermons and go back to some parts we skipped at the beginning that have to do with Jesus' birth. This week we are going to look at the announcement of his birth

in Luke 1 before it took place, and next week we'll look at the announcement of his birth in Luke 2 after it happened.

Luke 1:26-38

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." ³⁴ And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?" 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. ³⁶ And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. ³⁷ For nothing will be impossible with God." 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.

This was a baby unlike any other and we see that in the things Gabriel told Mary. He described his greatness in verses 32-33 in three different ways. First, he said, "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High." The "Most High" was an ancient name of God that had to do with his supremacy over all other gods. He was far higher and greater than the gods of all the other nations on earth. They worshipped demon gods, but there was only one Almighty Creator God who was before all things and infinite in power and might. He is the "Most High."

Here, the angel refers to God using this name, saying that the baby to be born to Mary would be called "the Son of the Most High." Later on in Jesus' life we see that it was actually demons who called him this. They uttered it in terror when they encountered Christ during his years of ministry. In Mark 5:7 Legion says, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by

God, do not torment me.” They were terrified of the Most High and terrified of his Son. And that’s who Mary’s boy would be – the one who caused demons to tremble.

Gabriel also described Mary’s baby by saying, *“The Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David.”* The Jews knew what this meant. They knew the promise given to King David in their Scriptures. In 2 Samuel 7:16 the Lord told David through the prophet Nathan: *“And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.”* This promise was remembered throughout the generations and proclaimed by the prophets. The people believed that a descendant of David would always sit on the throne, though that hadn’t been the case since the exile to Babylon. But now, this son to be born of Mary would fulfill that promise. He was a descendant of David and would become the true King of Israel.

The third thing Gabriel said was, *“he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”* So not only would he be King, but his kingdom would last forever – not 50 years like David’s did. This ties in with the prophecies and expectations of the Messiah that the people were waiting for – a ruler who would usher in an eternal kingdom. Her son would not only be king, but he would be the long-awaited Messiah.

All these things in that little baby: he was the Son of the Most High, the King of Israel, and the Everlasting Messiah. Incredible power in that tiny package! But there’s one more thing we see in Gabriel’s pronouncement to Mary that has profound significance for us today.

In verse 27 Luke pointed out that Mary was a virgin – she was betrothed to Joseph, but not yet married, and she had never been with a man. It was because of that, Mary found Gabriel’s message to be confusing. She asked in verse 34: *“How can I give birth to a son if I’m a virgin?”* 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.”*

Among all these amazing things said about her son, we find out that he would be conceived in a different way than any other human. He would be conceived of the Holy Spirit – not by normal human procreation. Therefore he would be holy – the

Son of God.” This speaks of the nature of Jesus and that he would be different than every other baby – and this is paramount to us and our salvation.

We know from Scripture and our own experience that the human race is sinful. Ever since Adam, it’s part of our nature. That means not only are humans sinful because we sin, but we’re sinful because we have a nature that leads us to sin. Adam sinned in the Garden of Eden and sin entered the human race, and since that time, sin has been passed down from parents to their children, one generation after the next. All of Adam’s offspring are sinners by nature.

But the child to be born of Mary would be different. He would not be conceived of a sinful father and mother – he would be conceived by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the sinful nature would not be passed on to him. He would be holy – he would be sinless. He would be the “Son of God” – the only begotten, and not the Son of Adam.

I don’t think Mary could have understood what that all meant, but we have the full revelation of Scripture today which teaches us about these things. We know that there is one God who exists eternally as three distinct persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Mary would have known of God the Father, but of God the Son and Holy Spirit, she would have been unfamiliar. What the angel was telling her that day was that her son would be God the Son – the eternal Son of God incarnate. He would be fully human, but he would also be fully God. And he would be holy and free from any sin.

This is of critical importance to our salvation. Jesus had to be fully God and fully human to save us from our sins. Our sins cut us off from God and incur his righteous judgment and wrath. God is holy and the penalty for sin is death. Therefore, we can’t exist in his presence, and we deserve the punishment of death. The only way to be with God and be saved from our sins is to receive God’s righteousness and forgiveness. But because God is perfectly just, he can’t simply forgive sins – there has to be a payment and that payment is death. How then can we be saved?

God has made a way – the only way – through Jesus Christ his Son. Because he was fully human he could be our perfect representative before God. He lived a perfect life on our behalf so that he could earn our righteous standing before

God, and he paid the penalty for our sins when he suffered and died on the cross so that we could be forgiven. And because he was fully God, his sacrifice was sufficient to satisfy God's justice and wrath – it wasn't just one man dying to pay the penalty for the sins of many, it was God himself who became our substitute and paid the price.

So the virgin birth and the true nature of Christ is a big deal – Jesus is not just human, he is also fully God.

Great things come in small packages and that's what we have in the baby Jesus. (picture) He wasn't just a tiny baby; he was full of power and would end up changing everything. He has the power to change you – to save you from your sins. The work has already been done. He grew up, lived a perfect life, died on the cross and rose again. He is able to save each of us completely so that we can be reconciled to God, forgiven, adopted, and given the gift of eternal life.

But access to all these things doesn't happen automatically. It's a gift that has to be received. Jesus invites you to trust in him today; to believe in him and receive his free gifts of forgiveness and salvation. If you have never trusted him and surrendered your life to him, I invite you to do that today, right here in this very room. Let him enter your life and change you forever.