

Congregational handout; outline sermon text on following pages
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“Announcements to Mary and Joseph”
Luke 1:26-56, Matthew 1:18-25

December 6, 2015

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A. Facing a Dilemma

1. What Is a Dilemma?

- a. a dilemma is when you face a situation in which it seems that no matter what choice you make, you will be in the wrong
- b. there are moral and ethical dilemma where, because we live in a world that has been injured and infected with sin,
 - (A) we are not simply faced with the decision, 'Which is the greater good and which, the lesser?'
 - (B) but rather, 'Which is the lesser of two evils?'
- c. the Scriptures tell of people who facing such a decision, made the choice that pleased God: e.g., Rahab by faith lied to save the spies
- d. walking by faith in the Holy Spirit is the only way we can possess the necessary discernment to make the right choice in such a situation

2. A Job Application Dilemma -{2}.

- a. Picture this: you are driving along on a wild stormy night. You pass by a bus stop and you see three people waiting for the bus:
 - (A) 1. An old lady who is about to die if she doesn't get to a hospital.
 - (B) 2. An old friend who once saved your life.
 - (C) 3. The perfect man or woman of your dreams.
- b. Which one would you choose, knowing that there could only be one passenger in your car? This is a moral or ethical dilemma that was once actually used as part of a job application.
- c. You could pick up the old lady, because she is going to die and thus you should save her first; or, you could take the old friend because he once saved your life and that would be the perfect chance to repay him. However, you may never be able to find your perfect dream lover again.
- d. The candidate who was hired (out of 200 applicants) had no trouble coming up with his answer. He simply answered: "I would give the car keys to my old friend and let him take the lady to the hospital. I would stay behind and wait for the bus with the woman of my dreams."

3. Mary and Joseph Each Faced a Dilemma

- a. would Mary submit herself to God and carry through His plan in her

- (A) despite all the shame and reproach she would bear
- (B) possibly lose the husband to whom she was engaged
- (C) overwhelmed at the responsibility being placed upon her
- (D) or, say, "God, I simply won't do it!",
- (E) or, like Jonah, flee from home and God's purpose?
- b. would Joseph obey God and take Mary as his wife
 - (A) tarnishing his reputation in the following innuendo
 - (B) taking on parental responsibility for a child not his own,
 - (C) or maintain his dignity and carry out his plan to divorce Mary?
- c. but they were 'not disobedient to the heavenly vision'
 - (A) Mary submitted and gave birth to our Lord, Jesus Christ
 - (B) Joseph obeyed and made the child legally David's descendant
- d. there is quite a lesson of obedience in this couple which we could pursue: for, no matter the cost, it is worthwhile obeying God
- e. but today we shall rather look at some of the things that they learned about this child that they were going to have

B. From Gabriel's Announcement to Mary Luke 1:26-38

1. Verse 28 – Gabriel said, "... Rejoice, highly favoured one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!" (NKJV)
 - a. having an angel appear would be startling enough – but this was Gabriel, God's Mighty One, who attended upon God (v 19)
 - b. and his words would excite this young woman even more
 - (A) she is addressed as the one upon whom favour has been shown
 - (B) the one especially experiencing the presence of God
 - c. no wonder she was disturbed, thrown into confusion and debated within herself just what the angel could mean
2. Verses 30-31 – so Gabriel continues, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus." (NKJV)
 - a. the character of God's favour to Mary is now made known
 - b. she is to have a child, a boy-child
 - c. and this child is given a Name – Jesus – a name given to a person before their birth by God was God describing

- what her son would be
- d. it was a common Jewish male name
 - e. in the prevailing Aramaic language spoke by Jews, it was Yeshua; the shortened form of Yehoshua – Joshua in English – Jehovah saves;
 - f. so, although the name is not explained to her, she would know right away that her son was to be God's instrument of salvation
3. Verses 32-33 – the angel goes on, "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." (NKJV)
- a. now there is not doubt about the nature of this child she will bear
 - (A) like Joshua, His namesake, He will be great
 - (B) but he will be given a title that the Joshua of old could not have
 - (C) "Son of the Highest" – his nature marked by such a greatness that could only come directly from God Himself
 - b. He is to be King –
 - (A) the King descended from David (a note:
 - (1) when she had had a chance to think about it she would realise that Joseph, her fiancé would accept her as his wife, for ...
 - (2) though Mary was descended from David through her father (and Joseph's father-in-law), 'his father David' cannot mean that here
 - (3) but Joseph was a descendant of David through whom the throne could be legally inherited)
 - (B) the King promised through the prophets – not just of the tribe of Judah but of the whole house of Israel; of Jacob
 - c. He is to be King forever of an eternal kingdom
 - d. what an assault upon her senses, so it is not surprising that she asks the principal question upon her mind: "How can this be, since I do not know a man?" – that is, "since I am a virgin?"
 - (A) Mary was innocent and pure, but not ignorant
 - (B) she understood the force of the angel's words – but marriage to Joseph might be some years away – this son was to come soon
 - (C) how could all this be? ... how was it all possible?

4. Verse 35 – Gabriel explains, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.” (NKJV)
- a. this is going to be a miracle child – no other way is appropriate when the mighty Creator enters His own creation as a human being
 - b. the same Holy Spirit that moved upon the face of the waters in Genesis 1:2, (some commentators: ‘brooding upon’ as a bird upon her eggs, bringing the world into being) will move upon Mary to bring this child into existence, without any human intervention at all
 - c. therefore, this child will be the Son of God, not only in character, but in His very nature, being engendered by God and not by man
 - d. and, after being told of the miracle to Elizabeth, her kinswoman, to show nothing is impossible with God, Mary makes her submissive statement of faith: “Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word.” (verse 38, NKJV)

« C. From Elizabeth’s Words to Mary – for home study. Luke 1:39-45
D. From Mary’s Praise to God – for home study. Luke 1:46-56 »

- E. From the Angel’s Announcement to Joseph Matthew 1:18-25
1. Verses 18-19 – Joseph Is Informed about Mary – “Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly.” (NKJV)
- a. when Mary returned from visiting Elizabeth, it would soon be seen that she was carrying a child – only a few knew its miraculous nature
 - b. in Israel betrothal was as binding as marriage, and sometimes began years prior to marriage, while the wife matured to marriageable age and the husband worked to establish a home independent of parents
 - c. but to external appearances, Mary had been unfaithful and to a just man like Joseph, there seemed no possibility of going on with it
 - (A) he knew he was not responsible and guilty in this matter
 - (B) others would presume that he was
 - (C) yet he felt a tenderness for this young woman – who up until this time had always seemed so lovely, pure and innocent
 - (D) he had just come to the conclusion to divorce her quietly

2. Verses 20-21 – ‘But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”’ (NKJV)
- a. perhaps it was easier on Joseph that this angel appeared in a dream rather than in person – but it was no less convincing
 - b. as with Mary, the explanation is given of this child’s origin: he is brought into being by the power of God the Holy Spirit; a miracle
 - c. so Joseph, this just man, is to have no qualms, because the lesser evil – his own possible shame – must give way before the greater good – obedience to God that the purposes of God should be fulfilled
 - d. as with Mary, the Son is named: Jesus, Yeshua, Yehoshua
 - e. but not in the sense that most of the Jews expected of this coming One, this Messiah, this Saviour; for they thought that He would lead a victorious Jewish nation to defeat the Romans and free the Jews
 - f. no, this Saviour would defeat a far more ancient foe
 - (A) He will bring freedom from an enemy that had imprisoned not only the Jews, but all mankind from almost the beginning
 - (B) His battle will not be against Imperial Rome, but another power
 - (C) His freedom will not to be for but a season, as had happened to the Jews in the past in many cycles of enslavement
 - (D) but He shall save His people from their sins, from Satan, and He shall be “the author of eternal salvation unto all that obey Him” (Hebrews 5:9, NKJV)

F. Conclusion

1. Prophecy Fulfilled

- a. Verses 22-23 – ‘So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: “Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which is translated, “God with us.”’ (NKJV)
- b. these words do not appear to have been spoken by the angel
- c. but they are inserted before the narrative goes on to tell of Joseph arising and carrying out God’s commandments until Jesus’ birth
- d. so they may be a comment by the evangelist, Matthew; or perhaps, a record of what came to Joseph’s mind after

the angelic vision

e. in any event, what had been prophesied now came to pass

2. God Fulfills His Promises

a. sin entered mankind and immediately God began a series of promises that He would bring salvation to man, defeat to sin

b. to keep that promise God Himself entered the stream of mankind

c. "There was no other good enough to pay the price of sin; He only could unlock the gate of heav'n and let us in!"
-^{3}.

d. this is the news announced to Mary and Joseph

e. they obeyed, and we are blessed the child they raised who has become the Saviour and Lord of all those who believe in Him

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AV Authorized (King James) Version of 1769
NAS New American Standard version © 1960, 1995 The Lockman Foundation (usually the 1995 edition)
NKJV New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers

Some of the commentaries and resources used in the preparation of this message are identified as follow:

Kerux - The sermon & illustration data base compiled by Rev. David Holwick at the web-site, www.holwick.com.
RWP - *Robertson’s Word Pictures of the New Testament*, by Dr. A. T. Robertson

2. *'The Bus Stop Decision,'* – Kerux illustration #4654

3. *'There Is a Green Hill Far Away,'* by Cecil Frances Humphreys Alexander (1818-1895)