

What Child is This? 12-23-01

Matthew 1:18-2:2 Luke 1:28-35

Last week we looked at one of the many prophetic utterances about the Christ child, given hundreds of years before His birth. Since we are worshipping just a few days before the celebration of the birth of Christ, let's take a look at whom this child was declared to be by those surrounding his birth.

First let us look at what the angel Gabriel said to Mary.

Luke 1:28-35 (NIV)²⁸ *The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."*²⁹ *Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be.*³⁰ *But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God."*³¹ *You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus.*³² *He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David,³³ and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."*³⁴ *"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"*³⁵ *The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God."*

Gabriel calls Him, "The Son of the Most High, the Son of God." Unto us a child is born. That is, unto mankind, through this woman Mary, a child is born. Unto us a Son is given. The Son of God in His Divine sinless nature was a gift from God to an otherwise hopeless world. Mary could give birth to a human child conceived of the Holy Spirit, but in the flesh of that child God sent His one and only Son. The Hebrews used the term, "Most High", when speaking of God among the gods of men and the angels. He is over and above them all for they only exist by His permissive will. In Hebrew He was called, Elyowne. God the Most High! None compares, and none can stand against Him. He alone is Supreme. He is so superlatively greater that there really is no comparison. It is flattering to call any other a god, but it is unfair to God Almighty, for it is as if they were comparable. What is creation to the Creator? The difference is limitless, and yet this vast chasm was crossed when the Son of the Most High became flesh in the womb of Mary. It calls to mind the second Psalm. Psalms 2:7 (NIV)⁷ *I will proclaim the decree of the LORD: He said to me, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father.*

In this first chapter of Luke there is no article (the) in the original. But it is used numerous other places. He was uniquely the Son of the Most High God. The demons knew it. They live in that spiritual realm where it is plainly visible to them and so they cried out for mercy, "*What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? Swear to God that you won't torture me!*" (Mark 5:7 NIV)

The disciples who observed His holy life knew it, for they said, " *We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.*" John 6:69 (NIV) The religious leaders knew that Jesus knew it, for they asked Him, "*Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?*" "*I am,*" said Jesus. Mark 14:61b, 62a (NIV) The angels, the devils, the disciples and Jesus all knew He was, indeed, the Son of the Most High God. Do you know it? This little child is not just the son of a god, not just a visitor from a spiritual realm, not just someone from a higher plane, He is the one and only Son of the MOST HIGH GOD!

"The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David,³³ and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

In case anyone might misunderstand, Gabriel clarified with a few more references to the words of the prophets and the promises of God. This Son of the Most High is the One that is to reign on David's throne. He's the One that will reign over Jacob. He's the One who has the eternal Kingdom!

Gabriel added one more insight to the character of this child to be born. He called Him "holy". There are a lot of proud mothers in the world – mothers who think their child is the brightest and the fastest and the best, but I don't think you would find one that would call her child "holy". If she does, ask her again when that child is around two and a half. But this child in the womb of Mary, He is holy.

Then let's go to Matthew and see what Gabriel told Joseph about this baby. Matt 1:18-21 (NIV)¹⁸ *This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit.¹⁹ Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.²⁰ But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.²¹ She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."*

The angel named Him Jesus. That was the Hebrew name Joshua. It was not uncommon. There may have been another Jesus in the little town of Nazareth. There could have been a Jesus ben Samuel. Interestingly Jesus' name was not connected with His father Joseph but with the name of the city. The city name comes from the word Netzor, implying the Branch of David. So Jesus of Nazareth meant The Salvation of God from the Branch of David. 'Jesus' means Jehovah saves. Joshua of old saved the Israelites from the Canaanites. He led them to a salvation against a national enemy. But this child to be born was to save people from their sins! A man who saves from sin, how is that possible? They could grasp a man who turns people from sins, or a man who convicts

people of their sins, but saves them from sin? How could that be? Who can forgive sins but God? This child to be born would be the salvation from sin for mankind. What a declaration! Could Joseph possibly have grasped what that meant? Year after year he makes the journey to Jerusalem to offer up his lamb for a sin offering. Could he have understood, the Lamb of God was his stepson – Jesus?

The Apostle Paul said Jesus came into the world to save sinners. What a mission! How can this baby in the womb of his fiancée live up to a mission like that? Jesus – what a beautiful name! He came to save me from my sins. Our sin nature would drag us to destruction, and deceive us to death, but the grace of God manifested Jesus in the flesh to save us from our own sins.

Then there was the chorus of angels that the shepherds heard.
Luke 2:8-11 (NIV)⁸ *And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night.⁹ An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.¹⁰ But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.¹¹ Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.*

They, too, confirmed that He is Savior, as His name implies. But they added that He is Christ the Lord. Literally, that means the Anointed Master. To anoint was to pour oil upon the head of someone. You might recall Samuel anointing David as King. When the Jews looked for Messiah, which is the same as Christ, they were looking for the One that would fulfill the promises to David. They thought another David would come and free them from the Romans. Most did not understand this anointed One that is Master of all creation was coming to save them from a much more sinister enemy, sin. The oil upon the head was symbolic of the Holy Spirit upon the person. Jesus was filled with the Spirit from birth and walked in the Spirit constantly. He was the Christ – the anointed One. And He is the Lord. He is the Master over all creation. It came into existence through Him. He can speak to the wind and waves and they will obey. He can speak to sickness and it will leave. He can speak to the dead and they will live. He is Lord over creation. He is our Lord.

Not long after the birth a group of Magi from the East came looking for the child.
Matt 2:1-2 (NIV)¹ *After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem² and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him."*

The Magi called him 'King of the Jews'. They believed, in spite of His humble conditions. They knew from the sign in the heavens a Great King had been born. Their reference to Him as a king just confirmed what Mary already knew. He was going to reign on the throne of David forever, King of kings and Lord of

lords. The King is the Sovereign One whose will is obeyed. The King is the One before whom every knee shall bow. The eternal King is the One who has the power to keep His kingdom from all evil, from every assault. Thy Kingdom come!

Again we are reminded of Psalms 2, but this time verse 6 (NIV). ⁶ *"I have installed my King on Zion, my holy hill."* He is God's King. And again in Psalm 89, the psalm about the promise to David, ²⁶ *He will call out to me, 'You are my Father, my God, the Rock my Savior.'* ²⁷ *I will also appoint him my firstborn, the most exalted of the kings of the earth.* Psalm 89:26-27 (NIV)

That child is going to reign over His Kingdom forever and ever. Those who don't like that are out of luck. Remember what we read last week? Isaiah 9:7 (NIV) ⁷ *Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.* Right there, in the birth and childhood of Jesus, we have the promise of His eternal destiny. Isaiah 32:1 (NIV)¹ *See, a king will reign in righteousness and rulers will rule with justice.* He came to save us from our sins, but He will end up as our eternal King.

Look in the manger again. What child is this? Gabriel told Mary, "He is holy. He is the Son of the Most High, the Son of God." He told Joseph, "His name is Jesus – for He will save us from our sins." A choir of angels told the shepherds, "He is Christ the Lord." The wise men told us, "He is our eternal King!" That is why we celebrate this gift of God in the form of a baby. Marvel with the shepherds; worship with the Wise Men. Because of this baby there is hope of salvation, hope for the future! Because of this baby there is hope for you and me for now and forever. He has fulfilled the first part of what He was predicted to be. He will fulfill the rest. It is a sure hope! When you look into the manger, whom do you see? Marvel with the shepherds; worship with the Wise Men. O come let us adore Him.