

# Explore the Bible: December 22

*Delivered from Sin • Luke 1:26-38*

*By Wayne VanHorn*



VanHorn

Pr  
ev  
io  
us  
ly  
,  
we  
st  
ud  
ie  
d  
Go  
d'  
s  
de  
li  
ve  
ra  
nc  
e  
of  
th  
e  
He  
br  
ew  
pe  
op  
le

fr  
om  
Eg  
yp  
t.  
We  
no  
te  
d  
th  
at  
ac  
t  
of  
de  
li  
ve  
ra  
nc  
e  
po  
in  
te  
d  
to  
th  
e  
gr  
ea  
te  
r  
de  
li  
ve  
ra  
nc  
e

af  
fe  
ct  
ed  
th  
ro  
ug  
h  
Ch  
ri  
st  
's  
cr  
uc  
if  
ix  
io  
n.  
Ch  
ri  
st  
ma  
s  
ce  
le  
br  
at  
es  
Go  
d'  
s  
ul  
ti  
ma  
te  
pl  
an

of  
de  
li  
ve  
ra  
nc  
e.  
Go  
d'  
s  
Ch  
ri  
st  
ma  
s  
pr  
es  
en  
t  
to  
us  
is  
et  
er  
na  
l  
sa  
lv  
at  
io  
n;  
ou  
r  
gi  
ft  
to  
Hi

m  
is  
a  
li  
fe  
of  
hu  
mb  
le  
se  
rv  
ic  
e  
fo  
ll  
ow  
in  
g  
Je  
su  
s'  
ex  
am  
pl  
e.

When we place our faith in Jesus, He saves us once and for all time. As the Baptist Faith and Message states, "All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end" (BFM, Article V. God's Purpose of Grace).

### **FAVOR (Luke 1:26-30)**

In typical style, Luke provided a sense of time by dating Gabriel's annunciation to Mary with Elizabeth's sixth month of pregnancy. The story of these two expectant mothers became

intertwined for the duration of their lives (Luke 1:36).

Nazareth was a small, insignificant town located in the southern region of Galilee about four miles south of Sepphoris, the Roman provincial capital. How ironic that God would send His angel Gabriel to an insignificant town to announce to an unknown peasant girl, that she was favored of God (1:28,30). Nothing could prepare Mary for the awesome news she was about to receive.

Gabriel's statement, "The Lord is with you," echoes an important theological sentiment found in Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:23, John 14:3, and other passages. This statement captures the essence of Christmas. The creator God seeks us out, though sinful, to be with us. As the Apostle John stated, "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14).

The visit perplexed Mary, but typical of her nature, "she kept pondering what kind of salutation this was" (Luke 1:29). Gabriel encouraged her and calmed her fears, saying, "Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God."

### **ANNOUNCEMENT (Luke 1:31-33)**

After his perplexing salutation, Gabriel followed with the greatest announcement in human history. Mary, a righteous woman, who had never been with a man, was to conceive in her womb and bring to term, a son (1:31).

The angel instructed Mary to name Him *Jesus*, *Iesous* in Greek and *Yeshua'* in Hebrew. The name derives from the Hebrew verb *yasha'* meaning "to save, to deliver." Other biblical names are closely related, Joshua, Isaiah, and Hosea. The child would be named *Jesus* because He would save His people from their sins.

Gabriel's assessment, "He will be great," seems grossly understated in the light of history. Jesus would be called "the Son of the Most High," a reference to our heavenly Father, who is also called "the Lord God." In His exalted,

sovereign position on the throne of heaven, the Father will give to Jesus “the throne of His father David.” In this latter sense, “father” refers to Jesus’ distant ancestor King David, who reigned a millennium before Christ’s birth. God had promised David he would never lack a descendant to sit upon the throne (2 Samuel 7:11-16, 19). The Apostle Matthew introduced Jesus as “the Son of David” (Matt. 1:1).

Long before Jesus’ birth, the title “Son of David” had taken on messianic implications and is used 16 times in the Synoptic Gospels. Luke uses the phrase in Luke 3:31 in the genealogical sense. He also recorded the phrase twice in Luke 18:38-39, as the blind man of Jericho called out to Jesus by the messianic title “Son of David.” This week’s memory verses, Luke 1:32-33, remind us of the permanence of Jesus’ kingdom.

#### **VIRGIN BIRTH (Luke 1:34-38)**

Mary’s response was personal and biological, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?” Mary’s pregnancy would be like none other in history. The Holy Spirit would empower her to conceive a child. The reference to both the Holy Spirit and to the Most High (Father God) signifies the divine nature of Jesus’ birth (1:35).

Just as Mary’s pregnancy was to result in a miraculous birth, so was that of her older relative Elizabeth. The latter’s pregnancy in her old age is as much a miracle as the virgin birth of Jesus (1:36). Both miraculous births underscore the truth, “For nothing will be impossible with God” (1:37). Upon Mary’s acquiescence to the announcement, the angel departed from her, leaving her, no doubt pondering these things in her heart. We should ponder the miracles of Christmas, too.

*VanHorn is a professor of Christian Studies at Mississippi College, Clinton.*