

• *A question*

Do you ever wonder when will be the greatest moment of your life? Was it a long time ago in your younger days? Or will your greatest moment be in your advanced years (as it was with Zacharias and Elizabeth)? This event in Luke 1:26–38 was undoubtedly the greatest moment in the story of Mary, the mother of Jesus.

**1. God's mighty acts always catch us by surprise**

1. **God's mighty acts always catch us by surprise.** Look at Mary. This event certainly caught her by surprise. She was young, probably somewhere between fifteen and twenty years old. She was a spiritual person. She also had the kind of ordinary plans that any girl in her late teens might have. She was betrothed to a young man by the name of Joseph.

• *Gabriel*

Suddenly God stepped into her life and did something entirely dramatic. An angel appears to her. One of the greatest of the angels, Gabriel, comes to tell her something from God.

• *Natural and supernatural side by side*

In Mary's life the natural and the supernatural are side-by-side. She is a perfectly natural young lady. She is not a nun living in a convent. She is a teenager happily in love with a spiritual man named Joseph. And yet alongside a perfectly natural lifestyle comes a visitation from an angel!

• *At any moment the supernatural might break through*

The Christian life is like this. The natural and the supernatural run together side by side. We are ordinary people in many ways. We have perfectly natural desires and inclinations. Yet alongside the natural, there is the supernatural. God is in our lives and He might do something special at any moment. At any moment the supernatural might break through.

• *A surprising choice*

It was not only a surprise in the life of Mary, it was also a surprise in the history of the world. God is about to send His Son. He chooses a despised country – Israel. He chooses a despised area of that country – Galilee. He chooses an unimportant village within that area – Nazareth <sup>□1</sup>. He chooses not a famous rich man or a mighty politician, but an obscure teenage girl <sup>□2</sup>. However, the teenage girl is engaged to someone in the house of David whose ancestors were kings of Israel.

□1 1:26  
□1 1:27

• *Old Testament promise*

There was a promise in the Old Testament that although the kings in the line of David had ceased to function, yet God was still watching over the royal line. One day, it was promised, God's royal Saviour would come out of the line of David. At the time of our story the line of David was humiliated and despised. It did not seem very likely that any kings would be coming from it just yet! In any case the kind of 'Son of David' that people were hoping for was a soldier- politician who would reverse the fortunes of Israel and drive out the occupying Roman armies.

• *A surprising miraculous birth*

God used a surprising country, a surprising area, a surprising town, a surprising girl. And He used a surprising method: a miraculous birth!

**2. God's mighty acts open up great privileges**

2. **God's mighty acts open up great privileges.** The angel greets Mary: '*Greetings, you highly favoured person, the Lord is with you*' <sup>□1</sup>. Mary is amazed <sup>□2</sup>. What sort of greeting is this? She is afraid at being in the presence of an angel <sup>□3</sup>. She has sins and weaknesses in her life as much as anyone else. Any human being is afraid when God draws near to us, because we have somewhat guilty consciences. Even when we have

□1 1:28  
□2 1:29  
□3 1:30

• **Do not fear – something great is about to happen**

been forgiven the memory of how weak and sinful we have been can at any moment come back to us – especially when we are talking to an angel! But the angel encourages her. ‘Don’t be afraid’ <sup>□4</sup>, he says. And Mary is told what is about to happen. She will supernaturally give birth to God’s Saviour <sup>□5</sup>. No sexual relationship with any man will be involved <sup>□6</sup>. God is doing something new in the story of the world. He has already started the process and Elizabeth is also expecting her son to be born <sup>□7</sup>.

□4 1:30  
 □5 1:31-33  
 □6 1:34-35  
 □7 1:36-37

• **Jesus - a second Adam**

Jesus is about to be supernaturally born. A man is going to come into the world who is genuinely human but who has no earthly Father. He will be a Second Adam, a second person in the story of the human race who has no father but God. Like Adam, Jesus will be a person who comes into this world without sin. With Him, God will start the human race again.

**3. God’s chosen instruments experience suffering**

**3. God’s chosen instruments experience suffering.** It might seem a great privilege for Mary to give birth to Jesus, and yet what suffering was involved. Who would believe her when she said her pregnancy was miraculous. Who would understand? It would be quite impossible for her to explain. It would be decades before there was any group of people who would believe her. I suppose that it was not until after the day of Pentecost that there would be any large group of people who would believe her story.



• **Neither believed nor understood as was Jesus**

And what suffering she would go through, seeing her Son despised and rejected and eventually crucified. God’s servants invariably have tough times. They have to abandon all hopes of being understood by anyone. Nor will they ever be understood. Jesus was never understood. No promise exists that they must be vindicated during their own lifetime.

**4. God’s chosen instruments have to leave themselves in the hands of God**

**4. God’s chosen instruments have to leave themselves in the hands of God.** Mary replied: ‘Look at me, the servant-girl of the Lord. Let it be the way you have said’. She accepts God’s call for her life. She is willing to let God do to her and through her whatever He wants.

The day God calls us, the day we let God do whatever He wants, it will turn out to be the greatest day of our lives.

	<p>Dr Michael Eaton is highly respected internationally as a theologian, author, preacher and teacher. He lives in Kenya where he is one of the leaders of the Chrisco Fellowship. His <i>Preaching Through The Bible</i> (PTTB) books are highly popular worldwide. Michael Eaton puts the theological and practical meaning of the Bible in a clear and down-to-earth way so that what is written can be easily understood by the reader.</p>	
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