

INTRODUCTION

Once, a preacher was riding on an airplane with an astronomer. As they were talking the astronomer said, "I've never had much time for Christianity. I just think it can be summed up with 'do unto others as you'd have them do unto you.'" The preacher responded by saying, "Well I've never had much time for astronomy either. I think it can all be summed up with 'twinkle twinkle little star; how I wonder what you are.'" You can't reduce astronomy like that and neither can you simply reduce Christian truth to some popular platitude. Actually there are some deep truths in Christianity that can only be appreciated when we take the time to study them. The birth of Jesus, often called the "incarnation," is one such truth. It is so much more than a nativity set. It is God becoming like us so that we could become like Him.

Luke's description of the birth of Jesus is far more detailed than any other gospel writer. In order to help us grasp the fullest significance of who Jesus Christ was and what He accomplished, Dr. Luke takes us back to the very beginning of Jesus' life. He describes more fully than any other gospel writer the announcement of John the Baptist's birth and the announcement of Jesus' birth, then the birth of John and the birth of Jesus. By describing the origin of John and the origin of Jesus side by side he shows how their destinies dovetail in God's plan, but also how Jesus is vastly superior to his forerunner. It's obvious that Dr. Luke interviewed Mary to write this account. We learn things about her feelings and reactions that could only be the result of an eyewitness interview.

Luke 1:26-38: In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. 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, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end." "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. For nothing is impossible with God." "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said." Then the angel left her.

There is so much that we can learn from Gabriel's conversation with Mary. The reason it is exciting to study the Bible is because the same way that God dealt with people in the Bible thousands of years ago is the same way He deals with us today. The Bible says that God never changes. God says in Malachi 3:6 "I, the Lord, do not change." As we learn something about the way God related to the Blessed Virgin Mary, we can also learn about how He is relating to us today. While we are discussing what God said to Mary 2,000 years ago, I pray you will be thinking about what God is saying to you today. We can learn at least four things about the way God relates to us from this passage.

I. GOD CHOOSES ORDINARY PEOPLE FOR EXTRAORDINARY BLESSINGS

God chose an ordinary Jewish teenage girl to have the wonderful honor of being the mother of the Messiah. But some people claim Mary wasn't ordinary. She was the Blessed Virgin Mary. That leads us into a necessary discussion of what the Catholic (and Orthodox) Church teaches about Mary. Our Roman Catholic friends hold the Virgin Mary in very high regard. This is what is called the veneration of Mary. None of them would claim they worship Mary, but they hold some beliefs about Mary we don't. Now, the purpose of what I'm about to say is certainly not to attack the faith of other Christians. Some Baptists have such a negative attitude toward Catholics that they think *all* of them are lost. I happen to believe there are some Roman Catholics who are born-again Christians. I even am more broad-minded than that; I happen to believe there are some Baptists who are born-again Christians!

The reason I am going to point out what Catholics teach about Mary is so you can understand their beliefs and be able to discuss it intelligently with your Catholic friends. Now, don't miss my point; I don't believe the Bible teaches these things about Mary but that gives us the basis to understand the fundamental difference between Protestants and Catholics. We subscribe to the principle of *sola scriptura* (scripture alone). Catholics believe the Bible and the tradition or teaching of their church. They are taught to believe these things about Mary because it is the official dogma of their Church. These are beliefs that many Catholics hold dear and they don't like me to speak against them. Anytime I speak on this subject I get quite a few letters from Catholics who catch it on television; they claim I am guilty of a terrible heresy in believing (or disbelieving) what I do about Mary. But my job as your pastor is to teach you what the Bible says.

As early as the 5th century, (Council of Ephesus, 431 A.D.) Mary was given the title "Mother of God." Because we believe that Jesus is God, most of us don't have any problem with that title. But stemming from that, other beliefs about Mary have developed through the centuries.

(1) *The Immaculate Conception*. Most people think that has to do with the conception of Jesus, but it doesn't. It speaks of the conception and birth of Mary. Catholics believe Mary herself was born without any original sin and that she lived a sinless life. It was officially accepted in the Roman Catholic Church in 1854 when Pope Pius IX declared, "that from the first moment of her conception, the Blessed Virgin Mary was kept free from all stain of original sin." I believe that when the Bible says, "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, it includes everyone, except Mary's son, Jesus. The belief that Mary was totally sinless all of her life led to a second doctrine:

(2) *The Perpetual Virginity*. The Roman Catholic Church teaches that Mary was always a virgin, living a life of celibacy until she died; she never had sexual relations with Joseph or any other man, and never had any other children. It is taught that even the birth of Jesus did not violate Mary's virginity. The early monk, Jerome, stated it this way: "Christ passed through the womb of Mary like sunlight passing through a window." That doctrine became prevalent when the Roman Catholic Church was also teaching that priests and nuns must also remain celibate. Several times in the New Testament, it teaches that Mary had other children, who would be the

half-brothers and sisters of Jesus (same mother, different father). Roman Catholics explain these passages away saying they are only cousins.

(3) *The Bodily Assumption*. The Roman Catholic Church teaches that when Mary died, she was resurrected and bodily assumed into heaven, just like the Lord Jesus. While many Catholics believed that for centuries, it did not become an official dogma of the Roman Catholic Church until 1950 when Pope Pius XII declared that "the immaculate perpetually-virgin Mother of God, after the completion of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into the glory of heaven." Now perhaps you can see why most Catholics consider Mary to be "Mediatrice of Grace" or "Co-Redemptrix" with Jesus.

There is an order of priests in Rome who have in the courtyard of their compound, a sculpture of Jesus hanging on one side of the cross – and Mary is hanging on the other side. It is the official position of the Roman Catholic Church that Mary is the channel of all graces to mankind; however, they have stopped short of saying that no grace is received by men without her cooperation and intercession. Pope John Paul has been under considerable pressure to issue a papal edict officially stating Mary's role as Co-Redemptrix but to this date has not done so.

Now listen carefully: I believe that if our Catholic friends are guilty of the veneration of Mary, many evangelicals are guilty of what could be called the devaluation of Mary. We are sometimes so reactionary that we go to the opposite extreme. Because of the extreme emphasis on Mary in the Catholic Church, many of us completely ignore her wonderful role in God's plan of salvation.

What does the Bible say about Mary? First we are told she is a virgin. Some liberal scholars scoff at the idea of a virgin birth. She is called a "parthenos," which means a young girl who has never had sexual relations. Then, she herself states plainly in verse 34 that she has never "known" (ginosko) a man in an intimate way. She was officially pledged to marry to Joseph. It's not the same as a couple being engaged today. Jewish betrothal was an official arrangement that had to be solemnized by a priest and could only be dissolved by death or divorce. The couple was officially wed, but they did not live together.

In the Gospel accounts, Mary is seen as Jesus' mother who is faithful to support His ministry and is present at the cross when He is crucified. The last time we read Mary's name is in Acts 1:14, when she is listed among the 120 disciples who are praying in the Upper Room, along with Jesus' half-brothers. The disciples are praying with Mary, not to her.

I have a deep love and appreciation for Mary. I see Mary as an ordinary teenage girl who lived in the tough town of Nazareth. Nazareth was a town that served many soldiers and tradesmen because it was on an important trade highway. It had a reputation for being a corrupted village and there weren't many virtuous women there.

When Nathaniel first meets Jesus he asks, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" (John 1:46) But when the fullness of time had come for God to set His plan of redemption into action, the angels watched as He dispatched His angel, Gabriel. I'm sure they thought Gabriel was heading back to the Temple in Jerusalem where he had visited Zechariah six months earlier but

he bypasses the Temple. Surely he will stop in Jerusalem. After all, it *is* the City of God. But he passes right by Jerusalem and even Judea and heads north toward Galilee – the backwoods. Is he lost? Suddenly, he reaches his destination. The simple room of a little girl named Mary. He greets her with two powerful statements of assurance. “Mary, you are highly favored – God is with you.” You see, the nature of God’s grace is that it is unmerited favor. Mary didn’t earn or deserve this favor; she was given it as a gift of grace.

That’s a point of the story we can appreciate that our Catholic friends can’t. I don’t think she was sinless but she was a pure young lady who loved God and had her heart set on serving Him. All throughout the Bible we see that God chooses *ordinary* people for special blessings. We read in 1 Corinthians 1:27-28:

“But God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things - and the things that are not - to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him.”

God chose a stuttering shepherd Moses, who was a professional failure, to lead His people out of bondage. He chose a little shepherd boy, David, to kill a giant. He chose a nameless little boy with five loaves and two fishes to feed a multitude. In Numbers 22, God even chose Balaam’s donkey to deliver a message! I often sing a song about that and the last part of the song goes: “The Lord’s the One who makes the choice of the instrument He’s usin’/We don’t know the reason or the rhyme behind His choosin’/So if the Lord starts to using you don’t you pay it any mind/He could have used the dog next door if He’d been so inclined!” The next lesson we see is:

II. GOD PROPOSES PLANS THAT ARE HUMANLY IMPOSSIBLE

Let’s focus on the message that Gabriel delivered to Mary in verses 31 through 33. He reveals God’s plan to Mary – and it had to be mind-boggling. Her immediate response in verse 34 shows that she realizes this plan is humanly impossible. God specializes in plans that are impossible. After Gabriel tells her not to be afraid, Gabriel shares God’s five-fold plan of redemption – Mary would have a Son and He would:

(1) Be named Jesus

The name Jesus is such a simple name. God told Isaiah to name one of his sons Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz (Isaiah 8:3) I’m so glad God named His son Jesus!

According to a newspaper article, there is a couple in Beaumont, Texas who gave their first child an unusual name. When James Williams married his wife Cosandra, she made him promise that she could give their first child a name that contained parts of every family name that she had traced for her family. James said, “I didn’t think it was so great an idea, so we arrived at a compromise. It was agreed that I would name the boys and she would name the girls.” Their first child was a girl and Cosandra gave her an unpronounceable name comprised of 1,019 letters. They call her “Jameshawnell” for short. (*The Calgary Herald*, Sept. 19, 1996)

What a terrible experience it must be for that girl to have a name with over 1,000 letters in it. The name of Jesus is so simple it fits on the lips of little children who pray at their bedsides. It is so profound it fits the lips of elderly saints who are on their deathbeds.

Lela Long has written the little chorus that is in our hymnal. "Jesus is the sweetest name I know ... and He's just the same as His saving name. And that's the reason why I love Him so; for Jesus is the sweetest name I know."

The name in Hebrew is Yeshua, or Joshua, which means "Yahweh saves." I like to say it in English: Jesus. And I love to say it in Hebrew: Yeshua. There is a large organization called Jews for Jesus and last Christmas year they took out full-page ads in *USA Today* and other major newspapers. The simple message was: "The Messiah has come – and His name is Yeshua." Amen! The second thing the angel said was that He will:

(2) Be Great

That speaks of the nature of Jesus. It's the word *mega* in Greek. He will be the real mega-man. John Piper writes:

"Jesus is ten million times greater in every respect than the greatest men and women history has produced. If you took all the greatest thinkers of every country and every century of the world and put them in a room with Jesus, they would shut their mouths and listen to the greatness of His wisdom. All the greatest generals would listen to His strategy. All the greatest musicians would listen to His music theory and His performance on every instrument. There is nothing that Jesus cannot do a thousand times better than the person you admire most in any area of human endeavor under the sun."

Words fail to fill the greatness of Jesus. So Gabriel leaves it simple and yet so profound: He will be great. Next, Mary is told that her son would

(3) Be called Son of the Most High

This is simply another way of saying He would be called the Son of God. In verse 35 He is called "Son of God." Later, when the demon-possessed man from Gadara approaches Jesus, he combines the two and says, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?" (Luke 8:28)

(4) Occupy the throne of His father David

Mary was reassured that not only would her Son be of the lineage of David (because she was) but that He would one day sit on the same literal throne upon which King David sat. Whereas the first three parts of the announcement have already been fulfilled, these last two parts of the prediction will be fully accomplished in the future kingdom of Jesus. Just as Mary was a literal virgin who would have a literal son, I believe this is speaking of a literal throne. Finally the angel announces that Mary's little boy would:

(5) Reign over the house of Jacob in an eternal kingdom

The “house of Jacob” refers to the twelve tribes of Israelites. This means that Jesus will literally rule and reign over the nation of Israel sometime in the future. This was an amazing announcement in that it seemed utterly impossible. Here is a young, obscure teenage girl. God visits her and tells her that her son will be the Messiah – the greatest man to ever walk the face of planet earth – and that He will rule over Israel. Mary’s brain had to go into overload.

That’s the way God works. He specializes in proposing God-sized plans that are totally beyond the scope of human ability. That’s one of the best ways to recognize when God is working, something is being proposed or is happening that is totally impossible unless God is doing it.

The problem many of us experience in our walk with God is that we never move beyond the realm of what we can do for God in our own strength. Why? It’s a lot safer there. When God gets involved in our lives, He removes the boundaries and limitations of human ingenuity and achievement.

In the business world today, some people are commended because they are willing to risk new ideas and methods. These people are often said to “color outside the lines” or they come up with a new paradigm or they knock down the walls. They intimidate those who love the status quo, whose dying words are “We’ve never done it that way before” or “If it’s not broke, don’t fix it.” It is the nature and character of God to do new and totally unique things. In Isaiah 43:19 God says, “See I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?” Wow! A virgin having a child – now that’s something we never thought about before! God has a plan for your life that is totally awesome in its scope and it is totally impossible for you to accomplish on your own, but don’t worry because the next thing we see is that:

III. GOD PROVIDES HIS POWER TO ACCOMPLISH HIS PLANS

Remember what Zechariah said when Gabriel told him he and Elizabeth would have a child? He doubted; he showed unbelief. As a result, he was silenced for nine months. Look at Mary’s response in verse 34. She asks, “How will this be? I am a virgin.” The grammar makes it clear she does not *doubt* God, she is sincerely interested in knowing how it would be accomplished. We can learn something very important here:

(1) The wrong question is “why?”

Have you ever noticed that this is the question we always want to ask? Mary could have whined, “Why me, Lord?” I’m sure she thought about all the negatives in this plan. She would suddenly be a single woman who was pregnant. The social stigma involved in that would be harsh. When we are faced with changes in life we always want to ask, “WHY?” But

(2) The right question is “how?”

Mary was sincere in her question. It was as if she was saying, “I don’t have any doubt God *can* do this, but I’d sure like to know a little more about *how* He is going to accomplish it.” Mary is

like some of us. It's okay to have honest, legitimate questions. Gabriel didn't criticize her for asking "how?" When you face the big experiences of life, a good question to seek an answer to is "How, Lord? How can I cooperate with you to see your power released? How are You going to do this so that You will get the greatest glory?" Notice:

(3) God's answer: NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR GOD!

Gabriel gives Mary two kinds of information. First, he gives her a personal word about her situation, and then he gives her (and us) a general statement about God's power. Mary is understandably perplexed about how she is going to have a child when she is a virgin. Gabriel reveals a little background to the tremendous mystery of the Incarnation. He explains that the Holy Spirit would come upon her and that God's power would overshadow her. That word "overshadow" is beautiful. It pictures exactly what it says, a shadow moving over a person. You can't really touch or feel a shadow but you know when you are in the shade. In Genesis 1:2-3 when God created the Universe it says that the "Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said, 'let there be light' and there was light." The picture there is the Spirit hovering almost like a dove, overshadowing the lifeless void. In Hebrew, God says, "LIGHT BE!" And light became. Much the same thing was going to happen to Mary. The Spirit of God would "hover" over her and God would gently say, "LIFE BE!" And deep within Mary's reproductive system, an ovum would come to life." I think *every* conception and birth is a miracle but this was to be a mega-miracle!

But Gabriel also gives Mary a general explanation: "For nothing is impossible with God." This is a good time to push the pause button on this passage and take a look at your life. Is there something in your life right now that you sense is God's plan, but right now you are clueless as to how it's going to happen? It's God's plan for your marriage to stay together; it's God's plan for you to live a holy life; it's God's plan for you to live the abundant life; it's God's plan for you to go to heaven when you die. I could go on and on. When you reach the end of your possibilities, that's where you find the God of the impossible. You may be facing a terrible crisis in your life right now. I don't know what it is. The person seated next to you may not know what it is. There are two things in this passage that God may be trying to communicate to you:

- (1) DON'T BE AFRAID and**
- (2) NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR GOD**

Are you listening? Whenever you find God's plans you say, "But it's impossible!" Congratulations! You are right on track. God specializes in the impossible!

So far, we have been learning things about how God operates. Our focus has been on God's part in the process. We don't have any control about how God operates. But now, let's focus on us and how we should respond to God. In Mary's response, we see exactly the way we must respond to God. Notice that

IV. OUR BEST RESPONSE IS TO BELIEVE GOD- AND SURRENDER TO HIS PLAN

When I was a teenager, I enjoyed watching the old TV show *Mission Impossible*. At the first of the show, the character played by Peter Graves would play a little tape recorder outlining the next mission. The speaker would always say, "Your mission, should you choose to accept it . . ." I always thought, "Of course, he's going to choose to accept it; we've got 55 minutes left to the program. What are we going to watch if he *doesn't* accept it?" Truthfully, when God outlines His plan for us He gives us the same option. "Here's my plan should you choose to accept it."

Look carefully at what Mary says in verse 38: "I am the Lord's servant. May it be to me as you have said." You may ask, "How do you know Mary believed? It doesn't actually say she did." Look down at verse 45 to see what Elizabeth says to Mary. "Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished!" (Luke 1:45)

We could get into a deep theological debate about whether or not Mary had any choice in this matter. Some would remove her freedom of choice and say that God ordained to be so, and it was so Mary had no choice in the matter. I disagree. God created people and empowered them with the ability to make choices. Throughout the Bible, people make choices, good choices that have good consequences and rotten choices that have painful consequences. Let's see what that meant for Mary and what it means to us.

(1) God has voluntarily limited His Omnipotence in the area of our free will.

God really is all-powerful. That means He can do anything. He could have created us as race of carbon-based robots that were under His full and absolute control. If that had been the case, Adam and Eve would still be alive in the Garden of Eden, enjoying paradise. But strange as it may seem to us, God created Adam and Eve with the capacity to make choices independent from His power. He wanted them to *choose* to love Him and obey Him.

In college I enjoyed learning to do illusions and slight of hand. I have a friend, David Garrard, who is still doing gospel magic full-time. He used to teach me card tricks. I've forgotten most of them, but there is one card trick I can still do that baffles people. I ask you to choose a card and then shuffle it back into the deck as many times as you wish. After going through a bunch of steps to make it seem more complicated than it is, I can produce the card you chose – every time. How? It's called "forcing a card." From the very start, I've already glanced at a card, and there is a simple little technique that I can use so you will pick that card, but you are certain you are choosing it of your own free will. Nope. I'm forcing you to choose it and you won't even know it. That's how some people picture God's will. They think He is forcing us to make certain decisions. In life we think the deck is stacked, or the outcome is already determined but it's not. When you think about it, it was a pretty risky thing for God to do to create us with this thing called free will.

In the case of Mary, God wasn't going to force her to participate in the Incarnation. That's what verse 38 is all about. She had a choice in the matter. Gabriel came to announce God's plan; He didn't command her to cooperate.

(2) Before God can accomplish His plan in us we must surrender to His Will

A number of years ago, Paul McCartney sat down and wrote a song entitled, "Let it be." According to an interview I read one time, he got the inspiration for this song from Mary's response. Some of the words say, "When I find myself in times of trouble; Mother Mary comes to me; Speaking words of wisdom, 'Let it be.'" Mary had a choice in the matter. She demonstrated tremendous faith and humility in her response. You may wonder, "What would God have done if Mary had said, 'No?'" "I can't answer that. Nobody can. This may cause the hard drive called your brain to crash, but I believe God knew Mary would say, "Yes." But at the same time, He didn't force her to say, "Yes." We have a real struggle justifying God's foreknowledge with our free will but don't worry; it's not a problem with God. I don't think Gabriel knew she would consent. The Bible says salvation is so mysterious that "the angels have desired to look into it." (1 Peter 1:12)

Frederick Beuchner, in his book *Peculiar Treasures* imagines the scene that day when Gabriel visited Mary in this way:

"Little Mary struck the angel Gabriel as hardly old enough to have a child at all, let alone this child, but he had been entrusted with a message to give her, and he gave it. He told her what the child was to be named, and who he was to be, and something about the mystery that was to come upon her. "You mustn't be afraid, Mary", he said. As he said it, he only hoped she wouldn't notice that beneath the great, golden wings he himself was trembling with fear to think that the whole future of creation hung now on the answer of a girl."

Good news! She said yes. What about you? God has a wonderful plan for your life. Do you believe that? Have you surrendered to Him? God wants to save you from your sins and clean up your life and make you more like Jesus day by day. Have you ever said, "I am your servant, Lord, may it be to me as you have said?" Have you made the choice to really follow God? This passage is not just about Mary. It's all about you, and me too.

I'd like to conclude this message today by giving an evangelistic application and invitation. I know that many of you are already Christians. But some of you are honestly seeking to know what it means to be saved.

IN THIS PASSAGE WE SEE THE THREE ELEMENTS INVOLVED IN OUR PERSONAL SALVATION:

(1) THE WORD OF GOD

God spoke to Mary and He has spoken to us, not through an angel, but through His written word. You may wonder what it is God is saying to you. He is telling you that He loves you. He knows you are a sinner, but He still loves you. He is telling you that because He is a Holy God, He must punish sin. But He loves you so much that He has sent His son, Jesus, to pay the price for our sins so that we can be totally forgiven. He wants you to have an abundant life now and He wants you to spend eternity with Him in heaven after you die. You ask, "How do you know He is saying that to me?" Listen carefully, "God so loved the world (substitute your name) that He

gave His one and only son. That whoever would believe in Him would not perish but have everlasting life." (John 3:16) Can you get any plainer than that?

(2) THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT

Your next question is the same question Mary asked. "How?" God told Mary that the Holy Spirit would work in her life to bring about His word. He is saying the same thing to you. You see, you can't save yourself. You can't redeem yourself. It is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit that transforms you from a lost sinner to a saved person. Titus 3:5 says, "It is not by works of righteousness that we have done, but according to His mercy He has saved us by the washing of rebirth by the Holy Spirit." You see, when you trust Christ, the Holy Spirit works in you to bring about a re-birth. That's what it means to be born again. You can't be born again yourself, it is something that only the Holy Spirit of God can do. That's why Jesus said, "Flesh gives birth to flesh, and spirit gives birth to spirit." (John 3:6) Some of you think salvation is when you can get good enough to save yourself. You can no more save yourself than Mary could have impregnated herself! It is a mysterious work of the Holy Spirit. Finally, the last element is:

(3) THE WILL OF THE PERSON

God won't save you without your permission. You must believe His Word and surrender to the work of the Holy Spirit – and that's your choice. God won't force you to be saved any more than He would have forced Mary to carry the Messiah.

In 1829, the U.S. Supreme Court dealt with an unusual case. A man by the name of George Wilson was a federal prisoner. He had been arrested and convicted of mail robbery and murder. President Andrew Jackson offered George Wilson a full presidential pardon. George Wilson refused it. The president said, "You don't have any choice you are a free man." George Wilson refused. It went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court and they made a landmark ruling. Chief Justice John Marshall wrote, "A pardon is a paper, the value of which depends upon the acceptance of the person implicated. It is hardly to be supposed that one under sentence of death would refuse to accept a pardon, but if it refused, it is no pardon." And George Wilson was hanged. Jesus is offering you a pardon for your sins. Will you accept Him today?

OUTLINE

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II. GOD PROPOSES PLANS THAT ARE HUMANLY IMPOSSIBLE

God's five-fold plan of redemption—Mary would have a Son and He would:

1. Be named Jesus
2. Be great
3. Be called Son of the Most High
4. Occupy the throne of His father David
5. Reign over the house of Jacob in an eternal kingdom

III. GOD PROVIDES HIS POWER TO ACCOMPLISH HIS PLANS

1. The wrong question is "why?"
2. The right question is "how?"
3. God's answer: NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR GOD!

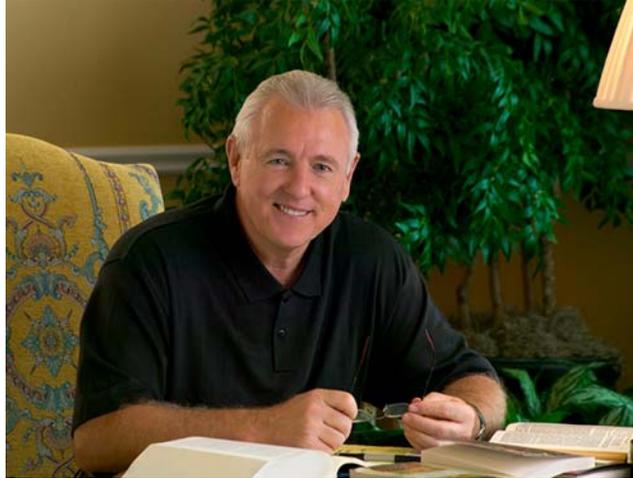
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To put it in Texas terms, “You’re mighty welcome to use any and all of my ingredients; just make your own chili!”

For the Joy...
Pastor David Dykes