

Session 18: Luke 1:1-9:50

- Like the historical books of the Old Testament beginning with Genesis, the literary genre of all four Gospels, including that of Luke, is **history**, not mythology. Luke makes this clear in the opening sentences of his introduction, as he says that he draws on the testimony of “eyewitnesses”, exercising due diligence by “having followed all things closely”, in order to write an “orderly account”, so that his readers can know the “truth”. Interestingly, according to tradition, the Holy Virgin was the primary source for his Gospel.
- **Luke addresses his Gospel to Theophilus (“lover of God”), who is not only a real person, but also symbolic, in that he addresses his Gospel to lovers of God.**
- Luke begins his historical account with the prophecy of the birth of John the Baptist, who is the forerunner of the Christ (Lk 1:5-25). **Significantly, his birth is prophesied by the Archangel Gabriel, who had last appeared to the prophet Daniel in Babylon, prophesying of 490 years until the coming of the Christ. Therefore, time is up!**
- Not surprisingly, therefore, approximately six months later, the Archangel Gabriel is again back in action, though this time to prophesy the birth of the Christ Himself. **The Archangel Gabriel visits the most perfectly beautiful and holy woman ever created, asking her, on behalf of the Most Holy Trinity, to give her virginal consent to conceive in her womb, by the power of the Holy Spirit, the Eternal Word, the 2nd Person of the Most Holy Trinity, that He might take upon Himself a human nature, becoming the God-Child of Bethlehem, growing into the God-Man of Nazareth.**
- This visit of the Archangel Gabriel to the Holy Virgin is called the **Annunciation, which means “announcement”**, as it was the time of the announcement of the coming of the Christ.
- **Importantly, the Annunciation guarantees that Jesus is the legitimate successor of the Davidic kings, as kingly succession was based upon the promise of the sitting king to the next woman to be the *gebirah* (queen mother), as she was thus regarded as the “woman of the promise”. Thus, the Annunciation solved a significant problem for the Jews who were expecting the Christ because, ever since they had returned from exile in Babylon, they could not restart the kingship because there was no woman to receive the promise from the sitting king, without which no legitimate king, not even the Messiah-King (Christ) could be established or recognized. But God Himself intervenes through the Archangel Gabriel, promising her that her Son will be given the throne of his father David (Lk 1:32b), and thus will bring to fulfillment the Davidic Covenant.**
- **Luke will later give the genealogy of the Christ through the biological line of Mary, who was of the house of David (Lk 3:23-38), just as Matthew, in his Gospel, will give the biological line of the foster-father Joseph, who was also of the house of David, as this was especially important to the Jews, as a father-son relationship by means of adoption was just as legitimate as biological because it was covenantal.**
- After the Annunciation, Luke details how, at the Visitation, Elizabeth greets the Holy Virgin as **“mother of my Lord”**, which is the very title in the Davidic Kingdom for the *gebirah* (queen mother). **Thus, Elizabeth intuitively by the Holy Spirit that the Holy Virgin is *the gebirah*, and that the Child in her womb is *the Davidic King*.**

- At the Visitation, in her song of praise called the *Magnificat*, **the Holy Virgin intuits by the Holy Spirit that her divine Son will bring to mankind ultimate fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant, that of universal blessing, that in Abraham's seed all of the nations will be blessed**, as she professes of God, saying, "He has helped his servant Israel, remembering his covenant fidelity, as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed forever (Lk 1:54-55).
- **Similarly, after the birth of John the Baptist, his father Zechariah also intuits by the Holy Spirit that, in the birth of his son, the Holy Spirit has set in motion the beginnings of covenant fulfillment of both the Davidic Covenant (Lk 1:69) and the Abrahamic Covenant (Lk 1:72-73).**
- Also, in the very first verse of this same prophetic canticle called the *Benedictus*, **Zechariah conveys prophetic insight into both the Incarnation and the Redemption, as he says, "Blessed be the LORD GOD of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people."** Significantly, "visit" and "redeem" are covenantal terms, as for example, when your covenant partner is sold into slavery, as we were sold into slavery to Satan by Adam and Eve, then you go "visit" him and "redeem" him, with redemption meaning "buy back", as we were "bought back" at the price of the Blood of Christ.
- In fulfillment of prophecy, the divine Christ is born in Bethlehem, the very birthplace of his forefather David (Micah 5). Appropriately, there are Eucharistic overtones to his birth in Bethlehem, **as the Christ Child, Who will become the Bread of Life in the Eucharistic Sacrament to be eaten by others, is laid in a manger, which is a feeding trough, in Beth-lehem, which means "house of bread".**
- In accord with the Law of Moses, the Christ Child was circumcised eight days after birth. **At that time, He was given the name Yeshua (Aramaic), which is Joshua (Hebrew) or Jesus (Greek) or Jesu (Latin), which means "God saves" or "salvation".**
- Also in accord with the Law of Moses, the mother must be ritually cleansed in the Temple forty days after birth, at which time occurred the Presentation of the Christ Child in the Temple. Thus, the Holy Virgin, to fulfill all righteousness, even though, strictly speaking, it was not necessary due to the unique circumstances of her giving birth, submitted to this ritual cleansing.
- At the Presentation, both the holy man Simeon and the holy woman Anna, inspired by the Holy Spirit, recognize the true identity of the Child. For example, Simeon acknowledges Him as **Savior**, saying to God, "My eyes have seen your **salvation (yeshua)** (Lk 2:30)." And then Simeon identifies the Child as the fulfillment of the prophecies of Isaiah, identifying Him as the Christ Who will be a "light of salvation to the nations, and glory for your people Israel (Is 42:6; 49:6)."
- Next, Simeon prophesies of the **co-suffering of the Holy Virgin, who is co-redemptrix**, participating in His redemption of the world by her redemptive sufferings of watching her Son be brutalized and killed in His redemptive Passion. **Specifically, Simeon prophesies, "And a sword will pierce through your own heart/soul too (Lk 2:35)."** In this, he prophesies of her spiritual martyrdom at the foot of the Cross, becoming **Queen of Martyrs**. Importantly, just as she is co-redemptrix, participating in the redemptive sufferings of Christ, **so too all Christians are co-redeemers through their personal redemptive sufferings. Offer it up!**