***A New Kind of King***

**Advent 2022, Jesus in the Old Testament December 18, 2022**

***Deliverers will go up on Mount Zion to govern the mountains of Esau.
And the kingdom will be the Lord’s.*Obadiah 21**

**The promise of a King like David**

 *After the king was settled in his palace and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies around him, 2 he said to Nathan the prophet, “Here I am, living in a palace of cedar, while the ark of God remains in a tent.”*

*3 Nathan replied to the king, “Whatever you have in mind, go ahead and do it, for the Lord is with you.” 4 That night the word of the Lord came to Nathan, saying:*

*5 “Go and tell my servant David, ‘This is what the Lord says: Are you the one to build me a house to dwell in? 6 I have not dwelt in a house from the day I brought the Israelites up out of Egypt to this day. I have been moving from place to place with a tent as my dwelling. 7 Wherever I have moved with all the Israelites, did I ever say to any of their rulers whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, “Why have you not built me a house of cedar?” ’*

*“ ‘The Lord declares to you that the Lord himself will establish a house for you: 12 When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. 13 He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. 14 I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with the rod of men, with floggings inflicted by men. 15 But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. 16 Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.’ ”*

2 Samuel 7

*26 In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, 27 to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. 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. 36 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. 37 For nothing is impossible with God.”*

*38 “I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “May it be to me as you have said.” Then the angel left her.*

Luke 1

1. In both promises, to David and to Mary, the king will be the Son of God

2. David’s “house” (a throne) and God’s ‘house” (a temple) are both fulfilled in Jesus!

3. Compare Mary’s response of faith to Zechariah’s response of reason (see Luke 1:18-19)

**From the King to the kingdom**

 *6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given,*

 *and the government will be on his shoulders.*

*And he will be called*

 *Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,*

 *Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

 *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.*

Isaiah 9

*44 “In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever. 45 This is the meaning of the vision of the rock cut out of a mountain, but not by human hands—a rock that broke the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold to pieces.*

Daniel 2 (For another picture of Jesus’ kingdom, see Daniel 7)

*12 When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, he returned to Galilee. 13 Leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum, which was by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali— 14 to fulfill what was said through the prophet Isaiah:*

 *15 “Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, the way to the sea, along the Jordan,*

 *Galilee of the Gentiles—*

 *16 the people living in darkness have seen a great light;*

 *on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.”*

 *17 From that time on Jesus began to preach, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.”*

Matthew 4

1. The prophets are looking forward to a king who would reflect something more than human

2. The promise is that God’s kingdom will “break” the kings and fill the earth

3. The central claim of Scripture is that Jesus is that human and divine King

**A different kind of King means a different kind of kingdom beachhead**

1. Jesus made the ethics of the kingdom our ethics

*Now when he saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, 2 and he began to teach them, saying:
 3 “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

Matthew 5. See also James 2:1-12, which leads right into the faith and works passage.

2. This kingdom is not now what it’s going to be (we call this inaugurated eschatology)

*31 He told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. 32 Though it is the smallest of all your seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and perch in its branches.”*

Matthew 13. This is where the D-Day/V-Day image is so valuable.

3. Entry into this kingdom is different

 *At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”*

*2 He called a little child and had him stand among them. 3 And he said: “I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. 4 Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.*

Matthew 18. For more pictures see John 3:1-21; Matthew 4:17; Acts 2:30-40.

4. We identify where this kingdom is breaking in differently

*19 The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; 20 idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions 21 and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.*

*22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. 24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. 25 Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.*

Galatians 5. See also Matthew 6, “Thy kingdom come”; Matthew 12:28;

3. This kingdom has a different kind of ending

*11 I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. 12 His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. 13 He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. 14 The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. 15 Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. “He will rule them with an iron scepter.” He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. 16 On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: king of kings and lord of lords.*

Revelation 19 (see Psalm 2; Psalm 110; Zechariah 14:9; Spurgeon’s “He Shall Be Great” sermon)

**Resources for meeting Jesus in the Old Testament**

I appreciated Tim Challies’ visual Christmas study at [*https://www.challies.com/visual-theology/a-visual-theology-advent-reading-calendar-for-your-family/*](https://www.challies.com/visual-theology/a-visual-theology-advent-reading-calendar-for-your-family/)

Tim Keller has a wonderful “big picture” series on Genesis which is available at [*https://www.monergism.com/topics/sermon-manuscripts-mp3s-scripture/genesis/chapter-genesis/chapters-03-05-fall*](https://www.monergism.com/topics/sermon-manuscripts-mp3s-scripture/genesis/chapter-genesis/chapters-03-05-fall). I’ve included his sermon on Genesis 3 is at [*https://www.monergism.com/paradise-crisis-%E2%80%93-genesis-31-9*](https://www.monergism.com/paradise-crisis-%E2%80%93-genesis-31-9)

William Ames has a classis Puritan take on the three-offices at [*https://heraldofgrace.org/offices-of-christ/*](https://heraldofgrace.org/offices-of-christ/)

John Calvin summarized his thinking on Christ’s work as prophet, priest and king at [*https://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/sdg/ppk\_calvin.html*](https://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/sdg/ppk_calvin.html)

Kim Riddlebarger, “The Triple Cure” at [*https://www.monergism.com/triple-cure-jesus-christ-%E2%80%93-our-prophet-priest-and-king*](https://www.monergism.com/triple-cure-jesus-christ-%E2%80%93-our-prophet-priest-and-king)

Spurgeon has several sermons on these themes:
on children and the kingdom: [*https://www.spurgeon.org/resource-library/sermons/receiving-the-kingdom-of-god-as-little-child/#flipbook/*](https://www.spurgeon.org/resource-library/sermons/receiving-the-kingdom-of-god-as-little-child/%23flipbook/)
“The King Priest” at [*https://www.thekingdomcollective.com/spurgeon/sermon/1495/*](https://www.thekingdomcollective.com/spurgeon/sermon/1495/)
“The First Beatitude” at [*https://www.thekingdomcollective.com/spurgeon/sermon/3156/*](https://www.thekingdomcollective.com/spurgeon/sermon/3156/)“He Shall Be Great” on Luke 1:32 at <https://www.monergism.com/he-shall-be-great-luke-132>

Mark Beach has a [helpful study of the relationship between church and kingdom](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwj3xf6xjID8AhV6JzQIHaxCAq4QFnoECCIQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.midamerica.edu%2Fuploads%2Ffiles%2Fpdf%2Fjournal%2F03-beachjournal2012.pdf&usg=AOvVaw0FYkCtvNKYx2_IEtEC42TN) in the Mid-America Journal, *MATJ* 23 (2012): 53-76.

David Schrock has a helpful article on inaugurated eschatology at [*https://davidschrock.com/2017/05/24/grasping-the-already-and-the-not-yet-four-quotes-on-inaugurated-eschatology/*](https://davidschrock.com/2017/05/24/grasping-the-already-and-the-not-yet-four-quotes-on-inaugurated-eschatology/)

Deffinbaugh has a “Silence Shattered” sermon on Luke 1 at [*https://bible.org/seriespage/1-silence-shattered-luke-11-38*](https://bible.org/seriespage/1-silence-shattered-luke-11-38)

Berkof has an extensive discussion of Christ’s kingship at [*https://ccel.org/ccel/berkhof/systematictheology/systematictheology.v.iii.viii.html*](https://ccel.org/ccel/berkhof/systematictheology/systematictheology.v.iii.viii.html)

J.C. Ryle has a good intro on Luke 1 at [*https://www.gracegems.org/Ryle/l01.htm*](https://www.gracegems.org/Ryle/l01.htm)

David Linden has a sermon on the “long story of Jesus” in Isaiah at [*https://davidhlinden.com/article/birth-of-jesus-christ*](https://davidhlinden.com/article/birth-of-jesus-christ)

R. C. Sproul has a wonderful summary of the incarnation at [*https://www.ligonier.org/posts/incarnation-what-we-celebrate-christmas*](https://www.ligonier.org/posts/incarnation-what-we-celebrate-christmas) and an article on Jesus’ kingship at [*https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/king-kings*](https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/king-kings)

Tim Keller wrote a Christmas Eve editorial in the NY Post at [*https://nypost.com/2016/12/24/christmas-is-the-most-unsentimental-way-of-looking-at-life/*](https://nypost.com/2016/12/24/christmas-is-the-most-unsentimental-way-of-looking-at-life/%20)

John Walton has a good analysis of names in Isaiah 7:14 at [*http://www.etsjets.org/files/JETS-PDFs/30/30-3/30-3-pp289-306\_JETS.pdf*](http://www.etsjets.org/files/JETS-PDFs/30/30-3/30-3-pp289-306_JETS.pdf)

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# Christmas is the most unsentimental way of looking at life

By [Timothy Keller](https://nypost.com/2016/12/24/christmas-is-the-most-unsentimental-way-of-looking-at-life/)

December 24, 2016
at [*https://nypost.com/2016/12/24/christmas-is-the-most-unsentimental-way-of-looking-at-life/*](https://nypost.com/2016/12/24/christmas-is-the-most-unsentimental-way-of-looking-at-life/)

Christmas is the only Christian holy day that is also a major secular holiday. This brings some discomfort on both sides. Many Christians can’t help but notice that more and more of the public festivities surrounding Christmas studiously avoid any references to its Christian origins. The background music in stores is moving from “Joy to the World” to “Have a Holly, Jolly Christmas.”

On the other hand, nonreligious people can’t help but find that the older meaning of Christmas keeps intruding uninvited, for instance, through the music of traditional Christmas carols. It can be irritating to have to answer their child’s question, “What does that music mean —‘born to give them second birth’?”

Christmas does not say, ‘Cheer up! If we all pull together we can make the world a better place.’

As a Christian believer, I am glad to share the virtues of that day with the entirety of society. My fear is, however, that its true roots will become more and more hidden to most of the population.

The secular Christmas is a festival of lights, a time for family gatherings, and a season to generously give to those closest to us and to those in greatest need. These practices are genuinely congruent with the Christian origins of the celebration. The emphasis on light in darkness comes from the Christian belief that the world’s hope comes from outside of it. The giving of gifts is a natural response to Jesus’ act of self-­giving, when he laid aside his glory and was born into the human race. The concern for the needy recalls that the Son of God was born not into an aristocratic family but into a poor one. The Lord of the universe identified with the least and the most excluded of the human race.

But the truth is that Christmas, like God himself, is both more wondrous and more threatening than most understand.

Christmas is about receiving presents, but consider how challenging it is to receive certain kinds of gifts. Some gifts by their very nature make you swallow your pride. Imagine opening a present on Christmas morning from a friend — and it’s a dieting book. Then you take off another ribbon and wrapper and you find it is another book from another friend, “Overcoming Selfishness.” If you say to them, “Thank you so much,” you are in a sense admitting, “For indeed, I am fat and obnoxious.”

In other words, some gifts are hard to receive, because to do so is to admit you have flaws and weaknesses and you need help. Perhaps on some occasion you had a friend who figured out you were in financial trouble and came to you and offered a large sum of money to get you out of your predicament. If that has ever happened to you, you probably found that to receive the gift meant swallowing your pride.

There has never been a gift offered that makes you swallow your pride to the depths that the gift of Jesus Christ requires us to do. Christmas means that we are so lost, so unable to save ourselves, that nothing less than the death of the Son of God himself could save us. That means you are not somebody who can pull yourself together and live a moral and good life.

Christmas, therefore, is the most unsentimental, realistic way of looking at life. It does not say, “Cheer up! If we all pull together we can make the world a better place.” The Bible never counsels indifference to the forces of darkness, only resistance, but it supports no illusions that we can defeat them ourselves. Christianity does not agree with the optimistic thinkers who say, “We can fix things if we try hard enough.” Nor does it agree with the pessimists who see only a dystopian future.

The message of Christianity is, instead, “Things really are this bad, and we can’t heal or save ourselves. Things really are this dark — nevertheless, there is hope.” The Christmas message is that “on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.”

Notice that it doesn’t say from the world a light has sprung, but upon the world a light has dawned. It has come from outside. There is light outside of this world, and Jesus has brought that light to save us; indeed, he is the Light.

Adapted from the book [*“Hidden Christmas: The Surprising Truth Behind the Birth of Christ”*](https://www.amazon.com/Hidden-Christmas-Surprising-Behind-Christ/dp/0735221650?tag=nypost-20&asc_refurl=https://nypost.com/2016/12/24/christmas-is-the-most-unsentimental-way-of-looking-at-life/&asc_source=web) by Timothy Keller (Viking). Keller is the founding pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in Manhattan.

## The Offices of Christ

**William Ames at** [*https://heraldofgrace.org/offices-of-christ/*](https://heraldofgrace.org/offices-of-christ/)

Christ undertook His office in order to obtain salvation for His people (1 Tim. 1:15). Both the calling and the components of the office are worthy to be considered. The calling is an action of God the Father, whereby He bound His willing Son to His office by an eternal covenant (Ps. 110:4; Isa. 53:10; Luke 22:22; Acts 4:28; Heb. 5:4, 6; 7:24). This involved choosing the ends (Isa. 42:1); foreordaining the means (1 Peter 1:20); and sending the Son (John 3:17).

There are three components to Christ’s office. First, Christ holds the office of Prophet (Deut. 18:15). By this, He reveals perfectly the whole will of God. This office has various names: Christ is a Teacher (Matt. 23:7); the Apostle of our confession (Heb. 3:1); the Angel of the Covenant (Mal. 3:1); the Word of God (John 1:1); the very Wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1:24); and the Treasure of wisdom and understanding (Col. 2:3).

In order to be the perfect Prophet, Christ necessarily was both God and man. It was necessary for Him to be God in order to understand and minister the will of God perfectly (John 1:18; 3:13; 1 Cor. 2:11, 16). If He had not been man, He could not have properly declared this will to men by His own person (Heb. 1:1).

Second, Christ holds the office of Priest. His priesthood is after the order of Melchizedek (Heb. 7:17), and therefore is indestructible (Heb. 7:16); stable and perfect (Heb. 7:18–19); eternal (Heb. 7:24); and perpetual, leaving no room or need for other priests (Heb. 7:24–25).

In the execution of His priestly office, Christ is the Priest, the sacrifice, and the altar. He is Priest in both natures (Heb. 5:6). He was the sacrifice principally in His human nature, as the Scriptures attribute His sacrifice most primarily to His body (Heb. 13:12; 1 Peter 2:24; Col. 1:22) and blood (Col. 1:20). However, this sacrifice became effectual because of Christ’s divine nature as the very Son of God (Acts 20:28; Rom. 8:3)—which is understood properly according to the idea of the altar (Heb. 9:14; 13:10, 12, 15). The function of the altar is to sanctify the offering, granting it dignity beyond itself (Matt. 23:17). Herein is manifest why Christ as Priest had to be both God and man: if He were not man, He could not have atoned for men; if He were not God, the sacrifice would not have been sufficient.

Third, Christ holds the office of King (cf. Deut. 17:14–20). His kingdom is called the kingdom of God; the kingdom of peace and glory; the kingdom of light and glory; the kingdom of heaven; and the world to come. In His kingdom, Christ’s rule is His power to dispense and administer all things pertaining to the salvation of men with force and authority (Ps. 2:6; Dan. 2:44; Luke 4:36). This kingship is universal, that is, it encompasses all ages, being eternal (Matt. 22:43–45; Dan. 2:44; 7:14). Christ’s rule is over all kinds of men (Dan. 7:14; Rev. 17:14)—even all the world and its creatures (Eph. 1:21, 22). Christ governs both man’s outward and inward activity (Rom. 14:17), dispensing everlasting life or death (Rev. 1:18). For the heirs of the kingdom, Christ as King brings the greatest peace and most perfect joy (Isa. 9:6; Eph. 2:16; Heb. 7:2). Again, it is necessary that Christ be King as God and man: the latter, that He might be the spiritual King of our souls, dispensing eternal life and death; the former, that He might be the Ruler of the same nature as His body.

The threefold office of Christ announces three truths. First, it identifies the state of man and how it is remedied in Christ. Man suffers under ignorance, which is resolved by the prophecy of Christ; dwells in alienation from God, which is restored by the priestly work of Christ; and possesses no power to live holily, which is established by the kingship of Christ. Second, Christ’s threefold office reveals the way salvation is brought to bear upon man. It is first preached by His prophecy; obtained by His priesthood; and applied by His kingship. Third, the threefold office exposes that salvation is accomplished by Christ. Christ first taught others the will of God; then He offered Himself; and afterward He entered to rule in His kingdom.

**William Ames** (1576–1633) was William Perkins’s most famous successor. His Marrow of Theology, had a profound impact in England, The Netherlands, and especially New England. This article is adapted from 1.19 of this classic.

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R.C. Sproul, “King of Kings” at [*https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/king-kings*](https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/king-kings)

The gospel of Luke ends with a supremely jarring statement: “Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven. And they worshiped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple blessing God” (24:50–53).

What is jarring about this passage is, as Luke reports the departure of Jesus from this world, the response of His disciples was to return to Jerusalem with “great joy.” What about Jesus’ departure would instill in His disciples an emotion of sheer elation? This question is made all the more puzzling when we consider the emotions the disciples displayed when Jesus earlier had told them that His departure would come soon. At that time, the idea that their Lord would leave their presence provoked in them a spirit of profound remorse. It would seem that nothing could be more depressing than to anticipate separation from the presence of Jesus. Yet, in a very short period of time, that depression changed to unspeakable joy.

We have to ask what is it that provoked such a radical change of emotion within the hearts of Jesus’ disciples. The answer to that question is plain in the New Testament. Between the time of Jesus’ announcement to them that He would soon be going away and the time of His actual departure, the disciples came to realize two things. First, they realized why it was that Jesus was leaving. Secondly, they understood the place to which He was going. Jesus was leaving not in order that they might be left alone and comfortless, but that He might ascend into heaven. The New Testament idea of ascension means something far more weighty than merely going up into the sky or even to the abode of the heavenlies. In His ascension, Jesus was going to a specific place for a specific reason. He was ascending into heaven for the purpose of His investiture and coronation as the King of kings and Lord of lords. The New Testament title used to describe Jesus in His kingly role is the “King of kings” and likewise the title “Lord of lords.” This particular literary structure means more than Jesus’ establishment in a position of authority by which He will rule over lesser kings. Rather, it is a structure that indicates the supremacy of Jesus in His monarchical majesty. He is King in the highest possible sense of kingship.

In biblical terms, it is unthinkable to have a king without a kingdom. Since Jesus ascends to His coronation as king, with that coronation comes the designation by the Father of a realm over which He rules. That realm is all creation.

There are two gross errors in modern theology regarding the biblical concept of the kingdom of God. The first is that the kingdom has already been consummated and that nothing is left for the reign of Christ to be made manifest. Such a view can be described as over-realized eschatology (last things). With the realization of the fullness of the kingdom, there would be no more to look forward to in terms of the triumph of Christ. The other error is that which a vast number of Christians believe, that the kingdom of God is something totally futuristic — that is, in no sense does the kingdom of God exist already. This view takes such a strong attitude toward the future dimension of the kingdom of God that even such New Testament passages as the Beatitudes of [Matthew 5–7](https://www.esv.org/verses/Matthew%205%E2%80%937/), have no application to the church today because they belong to the future age of the kingdom, which has not yet begun.

Both of the above views do violence to the clear teaching of the New Testament that the kingdom of God has indeed begun. The King is already in place. He has already received all authority on heaven and on earth. That means that at this very moment the supreme authority over the kingdoms of this world and over the entire cosmos is in the hands of King Jesus. There is no inch of real estate, no symbol of power in this world that is not under His ownership and His rule at this very moment. In Paul’s letter to the Philippians, in chapter 2, in the so-called kenotic hymn, it is said that Jesus is given the name that is above all names. The name that He is given that rises above all other titles that anyone can receive, is a name that is reserved for God. It is God’s title Adonai, which means the “One who is absolutely sovereign.” Again, this title is one of supreme governorship for the One who is the King of all of the earth.

The New Testament translation of the Old Testament title adonai is the name lord. When Paul says that at the name of Jesus every knee must bow and every tongue confess, the reason for the bowing in obeisance and for confessing is that they are to declare with their lips that Jesus is Lord — that is, He is the sovereign ruler. That was the first confession of faith of the early church.

Then Rome, in her misguided, pagan tyranny tried to enforce a loyalty oath to the emperor cult of religion, in which all people were required to recite the phrase kaisar kurios — “Caesar is lord.” The Christians responded by showing every possible form of civil obedience, by paying their taxes, by honoring the king, by being model citizens; but they could not in good conscience obey the mandate of Caesar to proclaim him lord. Their response to the loyalty oath, kaisar kurios, was as profound in its ramifications as it was simple in its expression, Jesus ho kurios, Jesus is Lord. The lordship of Jesus is not simply a hope of Christians that someday might be realized; it is a truth that has already taken place. It is the task of the church to bear witness to that invisible kingdom, or as Calvin put it, it is the task of the church to make the invisible kingdom of Christ visible. Though invisible, it is nevertheless real.

### by C.H. Spurgeon at [*https://www.monergism.com/he-shall-be-great-luke-132*](https://www.monergism.com/he-shall-be-great-luke-132)

**Sermon No. 1760 - Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit**
**Sermon Delivered On Lord's Day Evening, December 2, 1883, By C. H. Spurgeon, At Newington.**

Being his last sermon before his journey to the South of France.

Strictly speaking, I suppose these words refer to the human Nature of our Lord Jesus Christ, for it is as to His humanity that Christ was born of Mary. The context runs thus—“Behold, you shall conceive in your womb, and bring forth a son, and shall call His name JESUS. He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David. And He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end.” The angel of the Lord thus spoke concerning the Manhood of “that Holy Thing” that should be born of the favored virgin by the overshadowing of the power of the Highest.

As to His Divinity, we must speak concerning Him in another style than this. But, as a Man, He was born of the virgin and it was said to her before His birth, “He shall be great.” The Man, Christ Jesus, stooped very low. In His first estate He was not great; He was very little when He was upon His mother’s breast. In His later estate He was not great, but despised, rejected and crucified! Indeed, He was so poor that He had nowhere to lay His head and He was so cast out by the tongues of men that they called Him a “fellow,” mentioned Him among drunken men and wine-bibbers—and even accused Him of having a devil and being mad! In the esteem of the great ones of the earth, He was an ignorant Galilean of whom they said, “We know not where He is.”

His life binds up more fitly with the lowly annals of the poor than with the aristocracy or whatever stood for that in Caesar’s day. In His own time His enemies could not find a word base enough to express their contempt of Him. He was brought very low in His trial, condemnation and suffering. Who thought Him great when He was covered with bloody sweat, or when He was sold at the price of a slave, or when a guard came out against Him with swords, lanterns and torches, as if He had been a thief? Who thought Him great when they bound Him and led Him to the judgment seat as a malefactor? Or when the cowards smote Him, blindfolded Him and spat in His face? Or when He was scourged, led through the streets bearing His Cross and afterwards hung up between two thieves to die?

Truly He was brought very low and a sword pierced through His mother’s heart as she saw the sufferings of her holy Son. When she knew that He was dead and buried in a borrowed tomb, she must have painfully pondered in her heart the words from Heaven concerning Him and thought within herself, “The angel said He would be great, but who is made so vile as He? He said that He should be called the ‘Son of the Highest,’ but, lo, He is brought into the dust of death and men seal His sepulcher and cast out His name as evil.”

Still, while I think that our text most fitly applies to the manhood of Christ in the first place, I rejoice to think that ---

“He who on earth as Man was known,
And bore our sins and pains,
Now, seated on the eternal throne,
The God of Glory reigns.”

The very Man who was despised and spat upon, now sits glorious on His Father’s Throne! As Man, He is anointed, “King of kings, and Lord of lords.” As man, He has been lifted up from the lowest depths and set in the greatest heights to reign forever and ever! Peter and the Apostles testified, “This Jesus has God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses, He being by the right hand of God exalted.” Stephen also said, “Behold, I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.” While we believe that and rejoice in it, we shall be wise never to dissociate the Deity of Christ from His Humanity, for they make up one Person.

I cannot help remarking that in the New Testament you find a disregard of all rigid distinction of the two Natures in the Person of our Lord when the Spirit speaks concerning Him. The two Natures are so thoroughly united in the Person of Christ that the Holy Spirit does not speak of the Lord Jesus with theological exactness, like one who writes a creed, but He speaks as to men of understanding who know and rejoice in the Truth of the one indivisible Person of the Mediator. For instance, we read in Scripture of “the blood of God”—Paul says in Acts 20:28, “Feed the Church of God, which He has purchased with His own blood.”

Now, strictly speaking, there can be no blood of God, and the expression looks like a confusion of the two Natures. But this is intentional that we may clearly see that the two Natures are so joined together that the Holy Spirit does not stop to dissect and set out differences. He says of the united Person of our blessed Lord that which is strictly true either of His Humanity or of His Deity. He is called both, “God, our Savior,” and, “the Man, Christ Jesus.” The combined Natures of the Man, the God, Christ Jesus our Lord, are one Person—and all the acts of either Nature may be ascribed to that one Person. Therefore I, for one, do not hesitate to sing such verses as these ---

“He that distributes crowns and thrones,c Hangs on a tree and bleeds and groans!

The Prince of Life resigns His breath;

The King of Glory bows to death.

Well might the sun in darkness hide,

And shut his glories in,

When God, the mighty Maker, died

For man, the creature’s sin!

See how the patient Jesus stands,

Insulted in His lowest case!

Sinners have bound the Almighty hands,

And spit in their Creator’s face.”

We shall not labor, therefore, to preserve the niceties of theology, but we shall, at this time, freely speak of our Lord as He is in His Godhead and in His Manhood—and apply our text to the whole Christ—declaring the Divine promise that “He shall be great.”

While my Brother was praying for me, I was wishing that I had the tongues of men and of angels with which to set forth my theme tonight, and yet I shall retract my wish, for the subject is such that if my words were the most common that could be found—yes, if they were ungrammatical and if they were put together in a most uncouth manner, it would little matter—for failure awaits me in any case! The subject far transcends all utterance! Jesus is such a One that no oratory can ever reach the height of His Glory and the simplest words are best suited to a Subject so sublime. Fine words would be but tawdry things to hang beside the unspeakably glorious Lord! I can say no more than that He is great! If I could tell forth His greatness with choral symphonies of cherubim, yet would I fail to reach the height of this great argument! I will be content if I can touch the hem of the garment of His greatness. If the Lord will but set us in a cleft of the rock and only make us see the back parts of His Character, we shall be overcome by the vision!

As yet, even of Jesus, the face of His full Glory cannot be seen, or if seen, it cannot be described. Were we caught up to the third Heaven, we should have little to say on coming back, for we would have seen things which were not lawful for us to utter. I shall not, therefore, fail with loss of honor if I tell you that my utmost success at this time will but touch the fringe of the splendor of the Son of Man. This is not the time of His clearest revealing. The day is coming for the manifestation of the Lord—as yet He shines not forth among men in His noontide!

His Second Advent shall more fully reveal Him. Then shall His people “shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father” because He, also, shall rise in the clear face of Heaven as the Sun of Righteousness, greatly blessing the sons of men.

I**. Let me touch my theme as best I can by, first of all, saying of our adorable Lord Jesus that HE IS GREAT FROM MANY POINTS OF VIEW.** I might have said from every point of view, but that is too large a Truth of God to be surveyed at one sitting. Mind would fail us; life would fail us; time would fail us—only eternity and perfection will suffice for that boundless meditation! But from the points of view to which I would conduct you for a moment, the Lord Jesus Christ is emphatically great!

First, in the perfection of His Nature. Think, my Brothers and Sisters. There was never such a Being as our Well- Beloved! He is peerless and incomparable. He is Divine and, therefore, unique. He is “Light of light, very God of very God.” Jesus is truly equal with God, One with the Father! Oh, the greatness of the Godhead! Jehovah is an Infinite Being— immeasurable, incomprehensible, inconceivable! He fills all things and yet is not contained by all things. He is, indeed, great beyond any idea of greatness that has ever dawned upon us. All this is true of the Only-Begotten. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning which were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made.”

“For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen.” “He is before all things, and by Him all things consist.” But our Lord Jesus is also Man and this makes the singularity of His Person, that He should be perfectly and purely God, and as truly and really Man! He is not humanity Deified. He is not Godhead humanized. I have admitted latitude of expression, but there is, in fact, no confusion of the substance. He is God. He is Man. He is all that God is and all that man is as God created him. He is as truly God as if He were not man, and yet as completely and perfectly Man as if He were not God! Think of this wondrous combination! A perfect Manhood without spot or stain of original or actual sin—and then the glorious Godhead combined with it! Said I not truly that Jesus stands alone?

He is not greatest of the great, but great where all else are little! He is not something among all, but all where all else are nothing! Who shall be compared with Him? He counts it not robbery to be equal with God. And among men He is the Firstborn of every creature. Among the risen ones He is the Firstborn by His Resurrection from the dead. Among the glorified He is the Source and Object of glory! I cannot compass His Nature—who shall declare His generation? He is one with us and yet inconceivably beyond us. Our nature is limited, sinful, fallen. His Nature is unbounded, holy, Divine. When Jehovah looks on us, we ask, “What is man, that you are mindful of him? And the son of man, that you visit him?” But, “when He brings in the First-Begotten into the world, He says, And let all the angels of God worship Him.” Shall it not truly be said as to His Nature, “He is great”?

He is great, also, in the grandeur of His offices. Remember that He has, for our sakes, undertaken to be our Redeemer. You see your bondage, Brothers and Sisters. You know it, for some of you have worn the fetters till they have entered into your soul—from such slavery He came to redeem us! Behold His Zion in ruins, heaps on heaps, smoking, consumed! He comes to rebuild and to restore! This is His office—to build up the old wastes and to restore the Temple of the living God which had been cast down by the foe. To accomplish this, He came to be our Priest, our Prophet and our King. In each office He is glorious beyond compare! He came to be our Savior, our Sacrifice, our Substitute, our Surety, our Head, our Friend, our Lord, our Life, our All!

Pile up the offices and remember that each one is worthy of God. Mention them as you may, and truly you shall never remember them all, for He, the express image of His Father’s Glory, has undertaken every kind of office that He might perfectly redeem His people and make them to be His own forever! In each office He has gained the summit of Glory and therein He is and shall be great! Have you ever stood in Westminster Abbey when some great warrior was being buried and when the herald pronounced his various titles? He has been greatly honored by his queen and his nation, for which he has fought so valiantly. He is prince of this and duke of that, and count of the other, and earl of something else—the titles are many and brilliant. What a parade it is! “Vanity of vanities! All is vanity!” What matters it, to the senseless clay, that it is buried with pomp of heraldry?

But I stand at the tomb of Christ and I say of His offices that they are superlatively grand! And, moreover, that they are not buried and neither is He among the dead! He lives and still bears His honors in the fullness of their splendor! He is still all to His people—every office He still carries on and will carry on till He shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father—and God shall be All in All. Oh, the splendor of this Christ of God in the mighty offices which He sustains! He is the Standard-Bearer among ten thousand! Who is like HE in all eternity? “The government shall be upon His shoulders and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” “Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord!”

Let our hearts give Him our adoring praise tonight, for He is great in the glorious offices which God has heaped upon Him. His Nature and His offices would, alone, furnish us with a lengthened theme, but oh, my Brothers and Sisters, the Lord Jesus is great in the splendor of His achievements. He does not wear an office whose duty is neglected—His name is faithful and true. He is no holder of a lie—He claims to have finished the work which His Father gave Him to do. He has undertaken great things and, glory be to His name, He has achieved them! His people’s sins were laid upon Him and He bore them up to the Cross and on the Cross He made an end of them—that they will never be mentioned against them any more forever!

Then He went down into the grave and slept there for a little season. But He tore away the bars of the sepulcher and left Death dead at His feet, bringing life and immortality to light by His Resurrection! This was His high calling and He has fulfilled it! His victory is complete! The defeat of the foe is perfect. “O Death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory?” Springing upward from the tomb when the appointed day was come, He opened Heaven’s gates to all Believers, according to the Word of God—“The breaker is come up before them, and their king shall pass before them, and the LORD on the head of them.” As He opened the golden gates, He led captivity captive and, receiving gifts for men, He cast down a royal largess among the poorest of His people that they might be enriched. This was His objective and the design has been carried out without flaw or failure!

Within the veil He went, our Representative, to take possession of our crowns and thrones, which He holds for us to this day by the tenure of His own Cross. Having purchased the inheritance and paid off the heavy mortgage that lay upon it, He has taken possession of the Canaan wherein our souls shall dwell at the end of the days when we shall stand in our lot. Is it not proven that He is great? Conquerors are great and He is the greatest of them! Deliverers are great and He is the greatest of them! Liberators are great and He is the greatest of them! Saviors are great and He is the greatest of them! They that multiply the joys of men are truly great—and what shall I say of Him who has bestowed everlasting joy upon His people and entailed it upon them by a Covenant of salt forever and ever? Well did you say, O Gabriel, “He shall be great,” for great, indeed, He is!

He shall be great, again, in the prevalence of His merits. Never a Being had such merit as Christ. His life and death cover all Believers from head to foot with a perfect obedience to the Law of God! With royal vesture are they clad— Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these! His blood has washed Believers white as the driven snow and His righteousness has made them to be “accepted in the Beloved.” He has such merit with God that He deserves of the Most High whatever He wills to ask—and He asks for His people that they shall have every blessing necessary for eternal life and perfection! He is great, indeed, my Brothers and Sisters, when we think that He has clothed us all in His righteousness and washed us all in His blood!

Nor us alone, but ten thousands times ten thousands of His redeemed stand, today, in the wedding dress of His eternal merit and plead before God a claim that can never be denied—the claim of a perfect obedience which must always please the Father’s heart! Oh, what mercy is that which has turned our Hell to Heaven; transformed our disease into health and lifted us from the dunghill and set us among the princes of His people! In Infinite power to remove sin, to perfume with acceptance, to clothe with righteousness, to win blessings, to preserve saints and to save to the uttermost, the Lord Jesus is great beyond all greatness!

My theme will never be exhausted, though I may be. Let me not delay to add that our Lord Jesus Christ is great in the number of His saved ones. I do not believe in a little Christ, or a little Heaven, or a little company before the Throne of God, or a few that shall be saved! Hear this, for I would gladly reply to a lie that is often stated and is the last resort of those who assail the Doctrines of Grace! They say that we believe that God has left the great mass of His creatures to perish and has arbitrarily chosen an elect few. We have never thought such a thing! We believe that the Lord has an elect MANY! And it is our joy and delight to think of them as a number that no man can number!

“Oh,” they say, “you think that the few who go to your little Bethel or Salem are the elect of God.” That, Sirs, is what you invent for your own purposes! We have never said anything of the sort! We rejoice to believe that as many as the stars of Heaven shall be the redeemed of Christ—that as many as the sands that are upon the seashore, even an innumerable company, are those for whom Christ has shed His precious blood that He might effectually redeem them! As I look up to the Heaven of the sanctified, my mind’s eyes do not see a few dozen saints met together in select circles of exclusiveness --- no, my eyes are dazzled with the countless lights which shine, each one, from the illustrious brows of the redeemed! Illustrious, I say, for each glorified one wears upon his forehead the name of the Most High!

My heart is glad to turn away from the multitude that throng the broad way and to see a greater multitude that throng the heavenly fields and, day without night, celebrate redemption by the blood of the Lamb! Have they not washed their robes and made them white in His blood? In all things our Lord will have the pre-eminence—and this shall be the case in the number of His followers—He shall therein vanquish His great enemy! His redeemed shall fly as a cloud, as doves to their windows. Countless as the drops of morning dew shall His people be in the day of His power. He shall be great in the host of His adherents in Glory.

Multitudes upon earth are even now pursuing their road to Heaven and greater hosts are yet to follow them. A day shall be when the people of God shall be increased exceedingly—above anything that we see at the present—they shall spring up as the grass and as willows by the watercourses, as if every stone that heard the ripple of the brook had been turned into a man! The seed of the Lord Jesus Christ shall multiply till arithmetic shall be utterly baffled and numeration shall fail. He is great—a great Savior of a great mass of great sinners who shall, by His redeeming arm, be brought safely, without fail, to His right hand in endless Glory! As the tribes of the natural Israel increased exceedingly, so, also, shall the spiritual Israel. The Lord shall multiply His Zion with men as with a flock—and thus shall the King of Israel be great!

Brothers and Sisters, the Lord Jesus Christ shall be great in the estimation of His people. If I were to try, tonight, to praise my Lord to the highest heavens, my Brother might well follow me and extol our Lord much more. Then I would get up from my seat, again, and I would not rest until I found yet loftier praises for my Lord and God! Then might my dear Brother return to the happy task and excel me, yet again! And then, for sure, I would be on my feet a third time and keep up the hallowed rivalry, lauding and magnifying Jesus to my mind’s utmost! And, if the Lord permitted, we would never stop, for I would give in to no man in my desire to extol my Lord Jesus Christ! I am sure that none of His people would give way to others in a humble sense of supreme indebtedness, but each one would say, “There is something which He has done for me which He never did for you. There is some point of view in which He is greater to me than He is to you.”

Brothers and Sisters, I admit that there are many points in which He is greater to you than He is to me! But yet, to me He is higher than Heaven, vaster than eternity, more delightful than Paradise, more blessed than blessedness itself! If I could speak of Him according to my soul’s desire, I would speak in great capital letters and not in the small italics which I am compelled to use. If I could speak as I would, I would make winds and waves my orators and cause the whole universe to become one open mouth with which to proclaim the praises of Emmanuel! If all eternity would speak as though it, too, were but one tongue, yet it could not tell all the charms of His love and the sureness of His faithfulness and His truth! We must leave off somewhere, but, truly, if it is the point of our estimation of Him, we can never express our overwhelming sense of His honor, His excellence, His sweetness!

Oh, that He were praised by every creature that has breath! Oh, that every minute placed another gem in His crown! Oh, that every soul that breathes did continue to breathe out nothing but hosannas and hallelujahs unto Him, for He deserves all possible praises! Do you hear the crash of the multitudinous music of Heaven? It is like many waters and like the mighty waves of the sea—and it is all for Him! Can you hear the charming notes of “harpers harping with their harps”? Their harpings are all for Him! Can you conceive the unutterable joys of the glorified? Every felicity of eternity is a song to His honor! Heaven and earth shall yet be full of the brightness of His Glory! Who can look the sun in the face in the height of his noontide? Who can tell the illimitable greatnesses of the Son of God? ---

“To Him, even to Him, let all praises be,
For He has redeemed our souls with blood
And set the captives free!”

He has made us unto our God both kings and priests—and we shall reign with Him forever and forever! Truly, He is great, and shall be eternally great! But, oh, Brothers and Sisters, how great must Christ be in the glory of Heaven! We have never seen that. Some of us shall see it very soon ---

“For we are in the border-land,
The heavenly country’s near at hand!
A step is all ‘twixt us and rest,
E’en now we converse with the blest.”

But the greatness of Christ in Heaven! Surely this is the grand sight for which we long to go to Heaven—that we may behold His Glory! “The Gory which He had with the Father before the world was,” and the Glory which He has gained by His service for the Father here below! Has He not said, “Father, I will that they, also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My Glory”? What honor and majesty surround our Prince in the metropolis of His empire! What is this city? From where comes its brightness? The sun is dim. The moon no more displays herself. “The glory of God did lighten it and the Lamb is the Light thereof.”

The whole city shines in the Redeemer’s Glory! And who are these that come trooping down the golden streets?— these shining ones, each one comparable to a living, moving sun? Each one as bright as the star of the morning? Ask them where their brightness comes from and they tell you that the Glory of Christ has risen upon them and they are reflecting His brightness as the moon reflects the brilliant radiance of the sun! If you sit down with one of these shining ones and hear him tell his story, the sum of the matter will be, “Not unto us; but unto Him that loved us, be honor and glory.” This will be the substance of every testimony—“He loved me and gave Himself for me.” But they will put it something like this—“HE loved me! He, that great HE!”

How they will pronounce it as they point to His Glory—“HE loved me—that little me.” They will sink their voices, oh, so low, as with wonder and surprise they express their admiration that ever He could have loved such unworthy ones as they were. But I must not—dare not—try to touch upon the Glory of Christ upon the Throne of the Father. Certain great divines have written upon the Glory of Christ, but I will guarantee you that when they died and went to Heaven, they half wished that they could come back again to amend their most glowing pages! Ah me, what can ignorance say of the All-Wise? What do blinking owls know of high noon? What do we poor limited creatures, babes of yesterday, know of the Infinite, the Ancient of Days and of the splendor that comes from the Firstborn at the right hand of the Most High?

It would need an angel to tell us that but, perhaps if he did, either we would not understand, or else what we did understand would overpower us and we should fall before our Lord as dead! The heavens are now telling the Glory of our Lord, but the half of it will never be told throughout ages of ages. Assuredly, concerning our adorable Lord Jesus, it is true—“He shall be great.”

**II. Now, by your leave, I want to turn the subject around a little and look at it in another light. “He shall be great,” and He is so, for HE IS WITH GREAT THINGS.** He is a Savior and a great one. As I have already said, it was a great ruin which He came to restore. The wind came from the abyss and smote the four corners of the house of manhood and it fell. Devils laughed and triumphed as they saw God’s handiwork spoiled. Human nature sank in shame. Paradise was blasted, sin was triumphant and the fiery sword was set at Eden’s gate to exclude us. It was a hideous ruin. But, oh, when Christ came, He brought a great salvation! He came to prepare a better Paradise and to plant in it a better Tree of Life. He came to give us possession of it upon a better tenure than before. Oh, He is a great Savior! He worked amid the chaos of the Fall and restored what Adam had destroyed!

And, Beloved, we were covered with great sin—some of us, especially so. But “He shall be great,” and therefore He makes short work of great sin! Great sinners, what a joy it ought to be to you to think that He is great and, therefore, has come to rescue such as you are and deal with such difficulties as beset and surround you! What if sin is great? His arrangement for its removal is great, too. Look, there, at Calvary, and if you can see it through your blinding tears, behold the Sacrifice He offered once and for all to put away sin! Regard the old Tabernacle and its faulty types—Aaron has offered his bullock which has smoked to Heaven, but no result has followed! Aaron has brought his lambs, his goats, his rams—and their blood in basins is thrown at the foot of the altar—the whole soil of the Tabernacle is saturated with the blood of bullocks and of goats! And no result has come of it—these can never take away sin!

See, now, the greater Sacrifice which Jesus brings. That great High Priest of ours is great, indeed, for He has offered up Himself without spot unto God! Lo, on His great altar there smokes to Heaven no longer clouding incense or burning flesh, but the body and soul of the appointed Substitute offered up in sacrifice for men! We have, none of us, a due conception of the grandeur of that vicarious offering which at once and forever made an end of sin! Think of it carefully and in detail. Count it no light thing that He who was the Father’s equal; that He who was pure and perfect in both Natures became a curse for us—and was made sin for us—and presented Himself as a Victim to Justice on our behalf!

This is a wonder among wonders, as much exceeding miracle as miracle exceeds the most commonplace fact! It overtops the highest lips of thought, that He who was offended should expiate the offense! He who was perfect should suffer punishment! He who was all Goodness should be made sin and He who was all Love should be forsaken of the God of Love! What merit and majesty are found in His glorious oblation! Great is the sin, but greater is the Sacrifice! The Atonement has covered the guilt and left a margin of abounding righteousness! Beloved, what a mercy it is for us that we have such a High Priest, for if you and I are burdened, tonight, with great transgression, there is great pardons to be had! Pardon so great that it actually annihilates the sin—pardon so great that the sin is cast behind Jehovah’s back while the pardon rings out perpetual notes of joy and peace in the soul ---

“His the pardon, ours the sin—
Great the pardon great.
Great His good which healed our ill,
Great His love which killed our hate.”

He shall be great, indeed, who has worked us so great a salvation.

And now, dear Friends, you and I, being greatly pardoned through the great Sacrifice, are journeying through the wilderness toward Canaan and we have great needs pressing upon us every day. We are poverty, itself, and only All- Sufficiency can supply us—and that is found in Jesus. We need great abundance of food—the heavenly Bread lies around the camp and each may fill his own. We require rivers of Living Water—the smitten Rock yields us a ceaseless flood— the stream never ceases. We have great demands, but Christ has great supplies. Between here and Heaven we shall have, perhaps, greater needs than we have yet known, but, all along, every resting place is ready, stores are laid up, good cheer is stored, nothing has been overlooked. The commissariat of the Eternal is absolutely perfect!

Do you feel, sometimes, so thirsty for Grace that like Behemoth, you could drink up Jordan at a draught? More than that river could hold is given you! Drink abundantly, for Christ has prepared you a bottomless sea of Grace to fill you with all the fullness of God! Deprive not yourselves and doubt not your Savior—why should you limit the Holy One of Israel? Be great in your experience of His all-sufficiency and great in your praises of His bounty—and then in Heaven you shall pour at His feet great treasures of gratitude forever and ever. Yes, and He is a Christ of great preparations. He is engaged before the Throne of God, today, in preparing a great Heaven for His people!

It will be made up of great deliverance, great peace, great rest, great joy, great victory, great discovery, great fellowship, great rapture, great glory! He is preparing for His redeemed no little Heaven, no starveling banquet, no narrow delight! He is a great Creator and He is creating a great Paradise wherein a great multitude shall be greatly happy forever and ever! “He shall be great”—great in the bliss of His innumerable elect! If we once get within the pearly gates and walk those golden streets, we are not ashamed, tonight, to vow that He shall be great—we will make Him glorious before His holy angels!

If praises can make Him great, our praises shall ring out night and day at the very loudest—and ten thousands times ten thousands of the glorified shall join with us in perpetual hallelujahs to Him who loved us before all worlds—and will still love us when all worlds shall cease to be! “He shall be great.” He must be great! If we live, it shall be our business to sing like the Virgin, “My soul does magnify the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.”

**III. I have come to a close when I have said a few words upon the last point, which is this—HIS GREATNESS WILL SOON APPEAR.** It now lies under a cloud to men’s bleary eyes. They still belittle Him with their vague and vain thoughts, but it shall not always be so. It is midnight with His honor, here, just now—or if it isn’t midnight, it is much the same, for men are stone blind. But it will not long be darkness, nor shall human minds be blinded forever. My eyes foresee the dawning. Did you hear the clarion just now? I dream not that ears of flesh can catch the sound as yet, but the ears of faith can hear it! The trumpet rings out exceedingly loud and long! And after the trumpet there is heard this voice—“Behold, the Bridegroom comes! Go you forth to meet Him.” Hear you not the shouts of armies—“Lo, He comes! Lo, He comes! Lo, He comes!” Right gladly I hear the cry. Let the world ring with the notes of joy. He comes! That trumpet proclaims Him!

I shall propound no order, now, as to how predicted events shall happen, but I know this, that the Lord shall reign forever and ever, King of kings and Lord of lords. Hallelujah! “He shall be great.” The nations shall bow at His feet. Rebellious enemies shall acknowledge Him as their King. The whole universe shall be filled with the Glory of God! There shall be left no space where this Light of God shall not shine. “He shall be great.” To Him “every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” Fret not yourselves, Brothers and Sisters, because of the false doctrine which roams through the world today. Worry not your hearts as though Christ were defeated. He is clad in shining armor through which no dart of error can ever pierce.

He lingers for a little while upon the hills, surveying the battlefield with eagle eyes. He leaves His poor servants to prove how weak they are, as they almost turn their backs in the day of battle. He lets Heaven and earth see the weakness of an arm of flesh. But courage, Brothers and Sisters! The Prince Emmanuel hastens! You may hear His horse hoofs on the road. He is near! On white horses shall His chosen follow Him, going forth “conquering and to conquer,” for the battle is the Lord’s and He will deliver the enemy into our hands. The Lord shall reign forever and ever—king of kings! Hallelujah! “He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet.”

The day is coming when the mighty progress of the Gospel shall make Christ to be great among men! And then you need not listen long to hear that other trumpet which shall wake the sleeping dead. The Risen One descends. Resurrection is at hand! Oh, what greatness will be upon Christ in that hour when all shall leave their graves, even the whole multitude of the slain of death! He shall be glorious among them, the First-fruits of the Resurrection, illustrious in those who rise by virtue of His rising! Oh, what honor will He have that day! Jesus, You are He whom Your elect shall praise as they see You victorious over Death in all those quickened myriads!

Then shall come the Judgment—and oh, how great will Christ be in men’s eyes in that day when He sits upon the Throne and holds the scales of justice and judges men for the deeds done in the body! I guarantee you that none will deny His Godhead in that day! None will proclaim themselves His adversaries in that dread hour! The earth is reeling! The sky is crumbling! The stars are falling! The sun is quenched! The moon is black as sackcloth! And Jesus is sitting on the Throne! A cry is heard from all His enemies. “Hide us, mountains! Fall upon us, rocks! Hide us from His face!” That face of His—calm, quiet and triumphant—shall be terrible to them.

They will cry in horror, “Hide us from the face of Him that sits on the Throne and from the wrath of the Lamb.” But they cannot be hidden! Fly where they may, those eyes pursue them—those eyes of love more terrible than flames of wrath! Oil, though it is soft, yet burns furiously—and Love on fire is Hell! Fiercer than a lion on his prey is Love when once it grows angry for holiness’ sake and the Truth of God’s sake! In that day those who know His love shall admire Him beyond measure, but those who know His wrath shall equally feel that “He is great.” Though it is their Hell to feel it, yet shall they know that there is none so great as He when He shall take the iron rod and dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel! Their cries of remorse and despair, as they rise up to the Throne of His awful majesty, shall proclaim to an awe-struck universe that Jesus is great! “Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.”

He shall be great, finally, when He shall gather all His elect about Him—when all the souls redeemed by blood shall assemble within His palace gate to worship Him. Oh, what a sight it will be when He is seen as the center, while, far away from north, south, east and west, a blazing host of shining ones, all glorious in His Glory, shall, in ever-widening circles, surround His Person and His Throne—all bowing down before the Son of God and crying, “Hallelujah!” as they adore Him! Not one will doubt Him nor oppose Him there! Oh, what a sight it shall be when everyone shall praise Him to the uttermost—when from every heart shall leap up reverent love, when every tongue shall sound forth His honors, when there shall be no division, no discord, no jarring notes—and countless armies shall as one man adore the Lord whom they love!

Again they say, “Hallelujah!” and the incense of their adoration goes up forever and ever. Oh, for that grandest of cries, “Hallelujah! Hallelujah! The Lord God Omnipotent reigns and His Son is exalted to sit with Him upon the Throne of His Glory forever and ever!” Truly, He shall be great! Oh, make Him great tonight, poor Sinner, by trusting Him! Make Him great tonight, dear child of God, by longing for Him! Make Him great as you come to the table by hungering after Him! Count it a great privilege to eat and drink with Him with overflowing delight!

Come with a great hunger and a great thirst after Him and take Him into your very self, and say, “He is my bread— He is my drink! He is my life—He is my All.” All the while let your spirit live by adoring and let every pulse of your body beat to His honor. Tune your hand, your heart, your tongue to this one song, “Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah! Unto Him that loved us and died for us, and rose again, be glory forever and ever!” ---

“To the Lamb that was slain all honor be paid,
Let crowns without number encircle His head!
Let blessing, and glory, and riches, and might,
Be ascribed evermore by angels of light.”

J. C. Ryle on Luke 1 at [*https://www.gracegems.org/Ryle/l01.htm*](https://www.gracegems.org/Ryle/l01.htm)

**Section 5. The Angel's Announcement to Mary, That She Would Be the Mother of Our Lord,** [**Luke 1:26-33**](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Luke%201.26-33)

*And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, you that are highly favored, the Lord is with you: blessed are you among women. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for you have found favor with God. And, behold, you shall conceive in your womb, and bring forth a son, and shall call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.*

We have, in these verses, the announcement of the most marvelous event that ever happened in this world — the incarnation and birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.It is a passage which we should always read with mingled wonder, love and praise.

**We should notice, in the first place — the lowly and unassuming manner in which the Savior of mankind came among us.** The angel who announced His coming, was sent to an obscure town of Galilee, named Nazareth. The woman who was honored to be our Lord's mother, was evidently in a humble position of life. Both in her station and her dwelling-place, there was an utter absence of what the world calls "greatness."

We need not hesitate to conclude, that there was a wise providence in all this arrangement. The Almighty counsel, which orders all things in Heaven and earth — could just as easily have appointed Jerusalem to be the place of Mary's residence, as Nazareth — or could as easily have chosen the daughter of some rich scribe to be our Lord's mother, as a poor woman. But it seemed good that it should not be so.

The first coming of Messiah, was to be a coming in poverty and humiliation. That humiliation was to begin even from the time of His conception and birth.

Let us beware of despising poverty in others, and of being ashamed of it, if God lays it upon ourselves. The condition of life which Jesus voluntarily chose, ought always to be regarded with holy reverence.

The common tendency of the day to bow down before rich men, and make an idol of money — ought to be carefully resisted and discouraged. The example of our Lord is a sufficient answer to a thousand groveling maxims about wealth, which pass current among men. "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich — yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich." ([2 Corinthians 8:9](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/2%20Cor%208.9).)

Let us admire the amazing condescension of the Son of God. The Heir of all things, not only took our nature upon Him — but took it in the most humbling form in which it could have been assumed. It would have been condescension to come to earth as a king and reign. It was a miracle of mercy surpassing our comprehension — to come on earth as a poor man, to be despised, and suffer, and die. Let His love constrain us to live not to ourselves, but to Him. Let His example daily bring home to our conscience, the precept of Scripture, "Do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly." ([Romans 12:16](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Rom%2012.16).)

**We should notice, in the second place — the high privilege of Mary.** The language which the angel Gabriel addresses to her is very remarkable. He calls her "highly favored." He tells her that "the Lord is with her." He says to her, "Blessed are you among women."

It is a well-known fact, that the Roman Catholic Church pays an honor to Mary, hardly inferior to that which it pays to her blessed Son. She is formally declared by the Roman Catholic Church, to have been "conceived without sin." She is held up to Roman Catholics as an object of worship, and prayed to as a mediator between God and man — no less powerful than Christ Himself. For all this, be it remembered — there is not the slightest warrant in Scripture. There is no warrant in the verses before us now. There is no warrant in any other part of God's word.

But while we say this, we must in fairness admit, that no woman was ever so highly honored as the mother of our Lord. It is evident that one woman only out of the countless millions of the human race, could be the means whereby God would be "manifest in the flesh" — and Mary had the mighty privilege of being that one. By one woman — sin and death were brought into the world at the beginning. By the child-bearing of one woman — life and immortality were brought to light when Christ was born. No wonder that this one woman was called "highly favored" and "blessed."

One thing in connection with this subject should never be forgotten by Christians. There is a relationship to Christ within reach of us all — a relationship far nearer than that of flesh and blood — a relationship which belongs to all who repent and believe. "Whoever shall do the will of God," says Jesus, "the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."

"Blessed is the womb that bore you," was the saying of a woman one day. But what was the reply? "Yes! rather blessed are those who hear the word of God, and keep it." ([Mark 3:35](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Mark%203.35); [Luke 11:27](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Luke%2011.27).)

**We should notice, finally, in these verses — the glorious account of our Lord Jesus Christ, which the angel gives to Mary.** Every part of the account is full of deep meaning, and deserves close attention.

Jesus "shall be great" — says Gabriel. Of His greatness, we know something already. He has brought in a great *salvation*. He has shown Himself to be a *Prophet* greater than Moses. He is a great *High Priest*. And He shall be greater still — when He shall be owned as the eternal *King*.

Jesus "shall be called the Son of the Highest," says Gabriel. He was so before He came into the world. Equal to the Father in all things — He was from all eternity the Son of God. But He was to be known and acknowledged as such by the Church. The Messiah was to be recognized and worshiped as nothing less than the true God.

"The Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of his father David," says Gabriel, "and He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever!" The literal fulfillment of this part of the promise is yet to come. Israel is yet to be gathered. The Jews are yet to be restored to their own land, and to look to Him whom they once pierced, as their King and their God. Though the accomplishment of this prediction tarry, we may confidently wait for it. It shall surely come one day, and not tarry. ([Habakkuk 2:3](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Hab%202.3).)

Finally, says Gabriel, "Of the kingdom of Jesus, there shall be no end." Before His glorious kingdom, the empires of this world shall one day go down and pass away. Like Nineveh, and Babylon, and Tyre, and Carthage — they shall all come to nothing one day, and the saints of the most high shall take the kingdom. Before Jesus, every knee shall one day bow, and every tongue confess that He is Lord. His kingdom shall prove to be an everlasting kingdom, and His dominion shall never pass away! ([Daniel 7:14](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Dan%207.14), [27](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Daniel%207.27).)

The true Christian should often dwell on this glorious promise, and take comfort in its contents. He has no cause to be ashamed of his Master. As poor and despised as he may often be for the Gospel's sake — he may feel assured that he is on the conquering side. The kingdoms of this world, shall yet become the kingdoms of Christ. In a little while — He who shall come, will come, and will not tarry. ([Hebrews 10:37](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Heb%2010.37).) For that blessed day let us patiently wait, and watch, and pray.

Now is the time for carrying the cross, and for fellowship with Christ's sufferings. The day draws near when Christ shall take His great power and reign; and when all who have served Him faithfully, shall exchange a cross for a crown!

 **Section 6. Mary's Question to the Angel — and His Reply,** [**Luke 1:34-38**](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Luke%201.34-38)

*Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Spirit shall come upon you, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow you: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of you shall be called the Son of God. And, behold, your cousin Elizabeth, she has also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. For with God nothing shall be impossible. And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to your word. And the angel departed from her.*

Let us mark, in these verses — the reverent and discreet manner in which the angel Gabriel speaks of the great mystery of Christ's incarnation. In reply to the question of Mary, "How shall this be?" he uses these remarkable words, "The Holy Spirit shall come upon you — and the power of the Highest shall overshadow you."

We shall do well to follow the example of the angel in all our reflections on this deep subject. Let us ever regard it with holy reverence — and abstain from those improper and unprofitable *speculations* upon it, in which some have unhappily indulged. It is enough for us to know that "the Word was made flesh," and that when the Son of God came into the world, he had a real body — so that He "took part of our flesh and blood," and was "made of a woman."

Here we must stop. The manner in which all this was effected, is wisely hidden from us. If we attempt to pry beyond this point — we shall only darken counsel by words without knowledge, and rush in where angels fear to tread. In a religion which really comes down from Heaven — there must needs be mysteries. Of such mysteries in Christianity, the incarnation is one.

**Let us mark, in the second place — the prominent place assigned to the *Holy Spirit* in the great mystery of the incarnation.** We find it written, "The Holy Spirit shall come upon you."

An intelligent reader of the Bible will probably not fail to remember that the honor here given to the Spirit, is in precise harmony with the teaching of Scripture in other places. In every step of the great work of man's redemption — we shall find special mention of the work of the Holy Spirit.

Did Jesus die to make atonement for our sins? It is written that "through the eternal Spirit, He offered himself without spot to God." ([Hebrews 9:14](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Heb%209.14).)

Did Jesus rise again for our justification? It is written that He "was quickened by the Spirit." ([1 Peter 3:18](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1%20Pet%203.18).)

Does Jesus supply His disciples with comfort between the time of His first and second coming? It is written that the Comforter, whom He promised to send is "the Spirit of truth." ([John 14:17](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/John%2014.17).)

Let us take heed that we give the Holy Spirit the same place in our personal religion, which we find Him occupying in God's Word.

Let us remember that all that believers have, and are, and enjoy under the Gospel — they owe to the inward teaching of the Holy Spirit.

The work of each of the three Persons of the Trinity is equally and entirely needful to the salvation of every saved soul. The ELECTION of God the Father, the REDEMPTION of God the Son, and the SANCTIFICATION of God the Spirit — ought never to be separated in our Christianity.

**Let us mark, in the third place — the mighty principle which the angel Gabriel lays down to silence all objections about the incarnation.** "With God, nothing shall be impossible."

A hearty reception of this great principle is of immense importance to our own inward peace. Questions and doubts will often arise in men's minds about many subjects in religion. They are the natural result of our fallen estate of soul. Our *faith* at the best, is very feeble. Our *knowledge* at its highest, is clouded with much infirmity. And among many antidotes to a doubting, anxious, questioning state of mind — few will be found more useful than that before us now — a thorough conviction of the almighty power of God. With Him who called the world into being and formed it out of nothing — everything is possible. Nothing is too hard for the Lord!

There is no *sin* too black and too wicked to be pardoned — the blood of Christ cleanses from *all* sin. There is no *heart* too hard and wicked to be changed — the heart of *stone* can be made into a heart of *flesh*. There is no *work* too hard for a believer to do — we can do all things through Christ strengthening us. There is no *trial* too hard to be borne — the grace of God is sufficient for us. There is no *promise* too great to be fulfilled — Christ's words never pass away — and what He has promised, He is able to perform. There is no *difficulty* too great for a believer to overcome — if God is for us, then who can be against us? The *mountain* shall become a plain.

Let principles like these be continually before our minds. The angel's reply is an invaluable remedy. Faith never rests so calmly and peacefully — as when it lays its head on the pillow of God's omnipotence!

**Let us mark, in the last place, the meek and ready acquiescence of Mary to God's revealed will concerning her.** She says to the angel, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word."

There is far more of admirable grace in this answer than at first sight appears. A moment's reflection will show us, that it was no light matter to become the mother of our Lord in this unheard of and mysterious way. It brought with it, no doubt, great honor at a distant period; but it brought with it for the present, no small danger to Mary's reputation, and no small trial to Mary's faith. All this danger and trial, Mary was willing and ready to risk. She asks no further questions. She raises no further objections. She accepts the honor laid upon her with all its attendant perils and inconveniences. "Behold," she says, "the handmaid of the Lord."

Let us seek in our daily practical Christianity, to exercise the same blessed spirit of faith which we see here in Mary. Let us be willing to *go* anywhere, and *do* anything, and *be* anything — whatever may be the present and immediate inconvenience — so long as God's will is clear, and the path of duty is plain. The words of good Bishop Hall on this passage are worth remembering: "All disputations with God after His will is known, arise from infidelity. There is not a more noble proof of faith than bring all the powers of our understanding and will, captive to our Creator; and without any questionings, to go blindfold wherever He will lead us."