

Midweek Advent Vespers 2
St. Luke 1:26-35
December 8th, 2021
Sts. Peter and Paul Ev. Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

Elizabeth Has Also Conceived a Son

In Nomine Iesu!

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

O Lord, send out Thy Light and Thy Truth, let them lead us. O Lord, open Thou my lips, that my mouth may show forth Thy praise. O Lord, graciously preserve me, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Last week the angel Gabriel was sent by the Lord God to Zacharias to proclaim to Him that he and his wife Elizabeth would bear a son. Zacharias however did not believe the word that the angel Gabriel said, even though Zacharias was standing in the temple of the Lord God, in the Holy Place, before the ark of the covenant, the seat of the Lord's majesty and His presence among the people. He is in the presence of the Lord God and His messenger comes to bring him good news, and he does not believe it. Zacharias instead asks for a sign. The sign that he would receive was that he would not be able to speak until the things prophesied by the angel Gabriel had come to pass. This was fulfilled at the circumcision of St. John the Baptist, when Elizabeth desired to name him John, but the family objected because there was nobody with that name in the family. When Zacharias asked for a writing tablet and wrote that his name was John, his lips were opened, and he prophesied of the baby John the words of the Benedictus, the canticle for Advent.

Today, the angel Gabriel is once again sent to someone to preach to them good news. He is sent to a virgin betrothed to Joseph, the descendant of King David, named Mary. In Nazareth of Galilee the angel Gabriel met the Blessed Virgin Mary and greeted her by saying that she was highly favored. She was highly favored, because she would give birth to a Son, and she was to name Him + Jesus, because He would save mankind from their sins. Unlike Zacharias, the Blessed Virgin Mary believes the words of the angel Gabriel, but she also is fully aware of the science. The Blessed Virgin Mary knows biology. A baby can only be conceived and born when both a man and a woman are united in the bonds of matrimony. It would seem that the Blessed Virgin Mary knows more about biology than many people today. How can she bear a Son when she has not known a man?

The Holy Ghost will overshadow her, and she will conceive and bear a Son. This Son will be great, and will be the Son of the Most High God. He will be given the throne of His father King David, fulfilling the promise made to King David long ago, that he would never lack a Man to sit on his throne. He will rule over the house of Jacob—the spiritual house of Jacob, which is the Church. And of His Kingdom, there will be no end. This Kingdom will last forever and ever; no enemy will be able to prevail against it. All those who by faith enter into this Kingdom will find forgiveness of their sins, eternal life with this King in His Kingdom in Heaven, and salvation from their enemies of sin, death and the devil. The Son born to the Blessed Virgin Mary will be the Son of God. In her Son, the Lord God will become man. The Lord God will dwell with His people in the person of the Son of God, our Lord + Jesus, the

Christ. And the Blessed Virgin Mary believes the word of the angel Gabriel unlike Zacharias, the husband of Elizabeth.

Zacharias, in his unbelief, asked for a sign to prove the prophecy of the angel Gabriel. This sign was his silence. The Blessed Virgin Mary, however, asks for no sign; she simply believes what the angel Gabriel tells her. What great faith the mother of the Lord God has! And even though she does not ask for a sign; even though she asks for no proof that these things will happen, she is still given a sign. The sign that she receives is that her cousin (or relative) Elizabeth has already conceived a son. She has been pregnant for six months already, even though she was called barren. Elizabeth has also conceived a son. She is advanced in years. She is called barren. Even her husband Zacharias is advanced in years. The time for them to have children has come and gone. But the Lord in His mercy answers their prayers and gives them a son.

This pregnancy of Elizabeth serves as a sign to the Blessed Virgin Mary. The two women are connected in more ways than that, however. For Elizabeth and the Virgin Mary are cousins. They share a close family relationship. Elizabeth is from the house of Aaron, the first high priest. Even her husband Zacharias is a descendant of Aaron the high priest. He is of the order of Abijah. The Blessed Virgin Mary is of the house of Judah. These two women are from the houses of priests and kings. Elizabeth is from the house of priests (as is her husband); and as will her son St. John the Baptist be a priest of the house of Aaron, who will go before the Lord + Jesus to prepare His way by turning the hearts of the people to repentance. The Blessed Virgin Mary is from the house of kings—of her father King David—as is the man to whom she is betrothed—Joseph. The Son born to her will inherit the throne of His father King David.

From these two women, Elizabeth and the Blessed Virgin Mary, come the forerunner to the Messiah, St. John the Baptist, and the Messiah Himself, our Lord + Jesus Christ. St. John the Baptist will prepare the way for the Lord, and the Lord + Jesus will take His place upon the throne of the holy cross so that He might win for us and all mankind a heavenly, eternal Kingdom. By His shed Blood and sacrificed Body on the tree of the holy cross, He has paid for the sins of all mankind, so that all those who believe on Him will have forgiveness, life and salvation in Him.

Therefore, the angel Gabriel comes to bring to promises—two words of good news. He comes to proclaim that two babies will be born that will lead to the salvation of all mankind—that will bring about our salvation. All of us who cling to the works and merits of this Son born to the Blessed Virgin Mary—to the Lord + Jesus, the Christ of the Lord God—in faith inherit the Kingdom that He won for us by His death on the cross. Just as the Holy Ghost overshadowed the Virgin Mary, and she conceived and bore a Son, we too are gifted with the Holy Ghost through the means of grace, Who through those means—through the preaching of the Word and Administration of the Blessed Sacraments—creates and sustains faith in us, so that we may, like Mary, believe the Word that is preached into our ears.

We believe the good news that the Lord God's messengers preach into our ears. For we believe that through the Lord God alone we have forgiveness of our sin, and only through Him and the sacrifice of the Lord + Jesus on the tree of the holy cross will we inherit the eternal Kingdom that He came down from Heaven to claim as His own. He claimed this Kingdom as His own, and He gives it freely to all those who cling to Him in faith.

Therefore, my dear friends, let us not doubt, like Zacharias who doubted the preaching of the angel Gabriel—the Lord's messenger—the good news that He desires to preach into our ears this day, and every day, but let us rather believe the words of the messenger, like the Virgin Mary, that a Savior is born for us. For we have both the sign of the silence of Zacharias, and the sign of the pregnancy of Elizabeth. We also have for a sign of our redemption the birth, life and death of our beloved Lord + Jesus Christ, our Savior, Who came down from Heaven to win for us a Kingdom, so that we might live

with Him and all the saints and angels in Heaven for all eternity. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give glory! I will extol Thee, O Lord, and I will praise Thy Name forever and ever. Amen.

The Votum:

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria!