

I. Introduction:

- A. At strategic, fulcrum points in redemptive biblical history, God has called men and women to trust and obey Him in a unique way that resulted in the birth of a child under unusual circumstances. Abraham and Sarah (elderly), Zacharias and Elizabeth (barren), and Joseph and Mary (virginal) were all promised and given a child despite impossible circumstances.
- B. Mary and Joseph were called by God to have one of the most unique prophetic journeys in all of redemptive history. Despite being virginal, Mary would literally give birth to the very Son of God. She and her husband-to-be Joseph would raise Jesus the Christ, the Messiah of Israel, in their home and family. I literally cannot think of a more unthinkable calling.
- C. My hope tonight is that you would be strengthened knowing others have gone before—who likely questioned their calling many times, who endured fearful trials, who wrestled with strange and perplexing prophetic messages and promises, and remained faithful to God through it all. These forerunners show us that it's possible to be faithful despite the difficulty of a unique calling.

II. The prophetic nature of the promise:

Luke 1:26-33 | ²⁶ Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!" ²⁹ But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. ³⁰ Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. ³² He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. ³³ And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."

III. The perplexing nature of the promise:

Matthew 1:18-25 | ¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. ²⁰ But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. ²¹ And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." ²² So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: ²³ "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us." ²⁴ Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, ²⁵ and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name Jesus.

IV. The perilous nature of the promise:

Matthew 2:13-16 | ¹³ Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him." ¹⁴ When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt, ¹⁵ and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt I called My Son." ¹⁶ Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men.

V. The precious nature of the promise:

Luke 2:7 | And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

VI. The painful nature of the promise:

Luke 2:33-35 | ³³ And Joseph and His mother marveled at those things which were spoken of Him. ³⁴ Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, "Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against ³⁵ (yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."

VII. The prevailing nature of the promise:

Luke 1:33 | And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."

Help me improve my notes! The first person to point out a legitimate mistake/typo on this document (during service) gets \$1/a gift.

Greater Peoria House of Prayer Announcements for December 15, 2023.

1. **Welcome** to the Greater Peoria House of Prayer... we're glad you're here and blessed to be worshipping God with you! Be sure to pick up any of the **free** materials at the back table in the prayer room or the desk near the front of the Gathering Grounds area downstairs, which includes teaching notes, stickers, pens, prayer cards and more. **Daily schedule:** We currently host evening prayer from 7-8 p.m. seven nights a week. Our **Friday Encounter Night** is from 7-9 p.m. and is our main corporate gathering each week featuring live worship and a teaching to inspire love for Jesus and prayer.
2. **General Announcements:**
 - Thursday, December 21, 7-8:30 p.m. Children's Christmas Party Club with Child Evangelism Fellowship
 - Friday, December 22, 7-9 p.m. Central Illinois School of Prayer; final course of fall semester on "Gratitude in Prayer"
 - Friday, December 29, no Encounter night service.
3. **Prayer room ministry opportunities:** If you are interested in leading or ministering during a live worship set by singing, playing an instrument, prayer leading or on the sound board, please contact us at info@gphop.org. We'd love to have you serve on one of our teams! **Team ministry opportunities:** If you feel the Lord has gifted you in the prophetic (or would like to grow in this gifting) and would consider helping on a prophetic team, send an email to info@gphop.org. Contact Mandy Kistner at mandy@gphop.org if you would like to schedule a future healing ministry appointment or help out on the healing team.
4. **Missions:** Please keep the following missionary friends in prayer as well as be considerate of their financial needs: **Ashley Bucknam** (YWAM, Nepal); **Phil Kellenberger** (International House of Prayer; Kansas City, MO) **Babett Mueller** (111 Global; Kansas City, MO); **Kerusso Perhay** (Pioneer 61; Mozambique); **Eric and Erin Simmons** (Bethany Global University; Bloomington, MN); **Alicia Wright** (ACTS, India); **Austin and Amy Zhu** (International House of Prayer; Kansas City, MO).
5. **Military:** Please keep the following members of our military in prayer as they valiantly serve the United States of America: **Jake Gerst**, stationed in Fort Johnson, Louisiana. **Kyle Nix**, stationed in Fairchild Air Force Base in Spokane County, Washington.
6. **Social media:** Follow us on Facebook (Greater Peoria House of Prayer - GPHOP), Twitter (@GPHOPrayer), Instagram (@GPHOPrayer), TikTok, Vimeo and YouTube for regular updates and inspiration. Use these social media sites to get the word out, share pictures, quotes you heard, etc. Contact Derek at derek@gphop.org if you're interested in helping with GPHOP's social media.
7. **Haven ministries:** Do you need space to pray? Maybe your Christian group needs a place to meet every once in awhile. We're making available the upper Prayer Room and lower-level Gathering Grounds for rent by donation. Email info@gphop.org if interested.
8. We provide **free Wi-Fi** to everyone here! The password for the **GPHOP** router is on the chalkboard in the downstairs fellowship area. You can also connect to Xfinity if you have a personal Comcast account.
9. **Prayer requests:** If you would like our community to pray for someone or something specific, please submit it to info@gphop.org.
10. **Giving:** If you have been blessed by the GPHOP and would like sow financially into the ministry, we would be more than blessed. You can give in cash, but if you would like to give to GPHOP with a check, please make it out to "Greater Peoria House of Prayer" or "GPHOP"—your gift is tax deductible. Thank you for your generosity! It's helping make day and night prayer with worship possible in central Illinois. You can place your gift in the Friday night offering during the 7 p.m. teaching or drop it in either of the two black donation boxes. Donations can also be mailed to our physical address at 117 East Washington Street, East Peoria, IL 61611. Donors can also use PayPal or our website (gphop.org/donate) to give electronically.

*Thank you for helping to **keep this prayer room sacred** by ensuring conversations with others are brief and kindly reminding others to do the same. Use the large Gathering Grounds fellowship area downstairs if you would like to chat at length.*