

Introduction for September 5, 2010

The announcement of Jesus' birth to Mary by Gabriel was glorious and marvelous. What sweet music it is to our ears! What wonder and joy floods our souls as we hear this Word from the throne of God!

Yet to Mary and Joseph, this announcement was troubling and even scandalous. Mary with child! She and Joseph were betrothed, but the marriage had not yet been confirmed before God and family. How could this be! Oh, the heartache, the pain and sorrow that raced through Joseph's mind and heart before Gabriel came to assuage his anxiety and heal his broken heart. What a startling announcement to Mary! Is this what the grace of God looks like? I will be with child yet without knowing a man? She had to have known that public ridicule would follow, and that she would incur subsequent shame and taunting. I believe that it is fair to say that she had looked forward to being with Joseph and beginning their lives with the simplicity and joy of vowing their love to each other, raising a family and engaging in life as husband and wife. Facing the days of raising their children before God was now challenged by the surprising announcement from Gabriel.

In one life-changing, earth shattering moment, the tranquility of life in that simple culture had drastically changed. She will be the mother of the Lord Jesus – her Savior and the Savior of the world! This profound reality would not have its ultimate impact on her until she stood at the foot of the cross. Her life with Joseph would be anything but normal, and as Simeon would prophesy to her, a sword would pierce her own heart and the thoughts of many hearts would be revealed. Joseph would also experience this profound change as he would now be engaged in teaching and training Jesus in His vocation and growing Him in the Hebrew Scriptures – the very Scriptures that Jesus Himself breathed out and inspired. What an awesome thing to be the adoptive father of the Lord Jesus!

Praise God for Matthew and Luke who give us such breathtaking insight into this historical reality and usher us into the life of our blessed Lord.