

SERMON ~ BIBLE READING: LUKE 1:26-56

Comment that we know this story so well that we lose sight of its massive impact – on Mary and on the whole of society.

Luke wants us to understand the dual nature of Jesus. He is Mary's son, one flesh with us. But at the same time he has the very nature of God: "He will be called the Son of the Most High God." What a staggering truth – that God should enter into the world in this way for us is something that we can never fully get our minds round. Nevertheless we need to find ways of keeping this truth alive in our hearts and minds and responding in appropriate ways, including obedience and worship.

WHY DID HE COME?

This chapter is revolutionary. The proclamation of any king other than Caesar was a profoundly subversive act, as followers of Jesus were later to find out. It is significant that Jesus was born under the rule of Caesar Augustus who, by wanting to be seen as a god-like figure, was trying to increase both his political and his spiritual control over the Roman Empire. The birth of Jesus shatters such illusions as he establishes a kingdom that transcends all earthly kingdoms. His birth has massive spiritual and political implications. Mary captures this well in her song, speaking of spiritual, social and political renewal as the King comes to reign. There is a real danger, if we allow Jesus any influence at all, of limiting that influence to a personal, spiritual realm. These verses demand that we impose no such limits but recognise his radical reign over every area. We are called to worship and obey the Son of God in all things.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

1. 'The Word of God, Jesus Christ, on account of his great love for mankind, became like us in order that we may be like him.' (Irenaeus)
2. 'I'm ever and always a stranger to grace. I need this annual angel visitation...to know the virgin conceives and God is with us.' (Eugene Peterson)
3. 'Now I know that God comes down and plays with us.' (Response of a child following

Questions on the Bible passage and sermon for you to think about during the week, either on your own or in a small group:

1. The narrative in Luke 1:26-56 is designed to create a sense of wonder and to emphasise the amazing reality of what is going on. What can we do to ensure that we don't lose this sense of wonder?
2. What in these verses gives you confidence to believe that Jesus is the Son of God? How will that affect the way you live this week?
3. Where do we see the teaching of Jesus having a revolutionary effect? What more could we do to ensure that he brings a genuine challenge to our world?