

Your will be done (Luke 1:26-38; Isaiah 7:14) Christmas Eve-2017

It would be great to have your Bibles opened and turned to Luke chapter 1 - from verse 26 to 38.

There's an outline in the bulletin to jot down some notes if you wish

Let me ask for God's help before we begin...

Intro

A question to begin with

How many of you have a "will"?

[It's a good idea for all of us to have a last will and testament]

[PowerPoint 1-Definition]

A will and testament is usually a written document expressing what we wish to happen to our possessions when we die. The document is usually testified or witnessed by some witnesses. Hence the word testament.

God has a will and testament - written down - it's called the Bible

It expresses God's wishes - and is witnessed by the godly people and prophets who wrote it down and declared it to the people of their generation - and passed it down to us

[PowerPoint 2-Old/New Testament]

But the Bible is not God's wishes for when He dies - because God is eternal and lives forever

God's will and testament expresses his wishes to us for all eternity

His wishes are that He wants a loving relationship with His creatures

The Old Testament part of the Bible - expresses God's character and points out that the relationship between Him and humankind is broken - and His will is to fix it by sending Jesus - God's Son - so the Old Testament says Jesus is coming, Jesus is coming

The New Testament part of the Bible - also expresses God's character and explains why Jesus came - and how He fixed the broken relationship between God and humankind - and God expresses His will for how we should live

A true story to begin with...

You might recognize it...

[PowerPoint 3-Ruth and Boaz]

There's a story of a girl named **Ruth**, she was a widow from a country called Moab (which is on the Eastern shore of the Dead Sea - in modern day Jordan), Ruth moved to Bethlehem with her mother in-law, **Naomi** (who was also widowed). Ruth and Naomi had been through a tough time, so moving back to Naomi's hometown of **Bethlehem**, seemed like a good plan.

Being poor. Ruth was **gleaning** in the fields. [Explain gleaning]

Whilst Ruth was gleaning - it just so happened that the owner of the field, a guy called **Boaz** - took a shine to young Ruth - and so began a romance and then marriage

Now it turns out that Ruth is the *Great Grandmother* of **King David** of Israel - the most famous King of Israel - and ultimately Ruth is the great great great... Grandmother of Jesus.

What a coincidence?

Or is it *God's will*? All part of *God's plan*! To fix the broken relationship between God and humankind?

(pause)

God to be with us (Isaiah 7:14)

Let's see how *God's will* pans out...

Our Old Testament reading is from the prophet Isaiah

Isaiah prophesied about 700 years before Jesus was born - 700BC

In Isaiah 7:14

[PowerPoint 4-Isaiah 7:14]

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.

We learn a few things from this:

It's the Lord God himself who is in control and He's the one that will act...

He's the one who will give a sign - the Hebrew word for sign - also means miraculous sign (the same word to describe the miraculous signs of the 10 plagues in Egypt)

What's the miraculous sign?

That a virgin - a woman of marriageable age who has not been with a man - a virgin will have a son

And one of his names - He will be called - is Immanuel -

Immanuel is a title - which means 'God with us'

So this boy when He is born - will be like having God with us - on Earth

It's all part of God's plan - God's will that a son - who is God - will be born

As the Lord's Prayer goes...

"Your will be done - on Earth - as it is in Heaven"

Just like it was all part of God's plan for Ruth to meet Boaz - and have a son called

Obed - and Obed to have a son called Jesse - and Jesse to have a son called David

- and so on - down to the family tree of Jesus (Matthew 1)

Birth of Jesus foretold (Luke 1:26-33)

Then when we come to our NT passage - Luke 1:26-38

Which happened roughly 2017 or so years ago

And in v26

We pick up the story of **Elizabeth** - who is 6 month's pregnant - she is in fact expecting a baby boy - who will be John the Baptist [but that's a story for another day)

Instead the focus turns to a relative of Elizabeth's - called Mary

[PowerPoint 5-Angel announces birth]

An angel called *Gabriel* (which means man of God) goes to the town of Nazareth in Galilee

And speaks to a virgin - called *Mary* - Elizabeth's relative -

Mary is pledged to marry a man called *Joseph* - who just so happens to be part of King David's family tree

The angel tells *Mary* - she has been highly favoured by God - in other words she will be specially honoured by God - she will have a special job to do for God

And the job that *Mary* will be doing - is amazing

She will conceive and give birth to a son - and will call him *Jesus* (which means God saves or Saviour)

This Son will be no ordinary boy - He is the Son of the Most High - the Son of God

So if we think about the prophecy of *Isaiah*

Isaiah said: *The Lord Himself will give a miraculous sign - which the Lord does -*

He sends one of His messenger's Angel *Gabriel* to speak to *Mary* to announce this miraculous sign

Isaiah said: *the virgin will conceive and give birth to a son* - Mary is a virgin and yet the angel says she will have a baby even though she hasn't slept with Joseph

Isaiah said - *the child to be born would be Immanuel - God with us* - and the angel tells us the child to be born will be *God's Son - Son of the Most High - God with us*

So we see Isaiah's prophecy is about to happen

And we see God's plan come into action

God's Son - Jesus - will leave the comfort of Heaven - and come and live on Earth

"Your will be done, God, on Earth as it is in Heaven"

Mary's Response (Luke 1:34-38)

Understandably Mary's response is one of surprise!

[PowerPoint 6-Mary's response]

Not doubting what the angel says - but wondering how this is possible - when she is still a virgin?

The angel explains - that it's God's Holy Spirit - God Himself and His mighty power - the same power that created the Heavens and the Earth - that same Power of God will cause the baby to grow inside Mary's womb even though she's a virgin
And she will have the Son of God - because God said so!

And in case she needed some proof - the angel explains that Mary's relative, Elizabeth, is also going to have a baby even though she is in her old age

How is that possible?

See v37 - For no word from God will ever fail

Basically because God says so!

Now look at Mary's response in v38...

I am the Lord's servant!

May your word to me be fulfilled!

In other words, "Your will be done on Earth, Lord, as it is in Heaven"

God's Will

[PowerPoint 7-God's Will]

This short passage tells us a few things about God's Will

[PowerPoint 7a]

- When **God says something will happen it will happen** - even if it takes 700 years to happen

PowerPoint 7b]

- **There's no such thing as a coincidence when it comes to God's will**
 - Ruth met Boaz not by chance - but part of God's plan
 - Ruth's son Obed - led to King David being born - and this led to David's family line coming all the way down to both Joseph and Mary - Jesus' earthly parents (Matthew 1 and Luke 3)
 - The family line of King David is important - because the OT promises that King David's kingdom will last forever (2 Sam 7)

- And that's only possible as the angel says in v32-33 - because God gives Jesus - the throne of David - and it is a kingdom that will never end - because it's God's everlasting kingdom ruling over Heaven and Earth
- And notice where Ruth met Boaz - in Bethlehem - and where was Jesus born (which we'll see tomorrow) - in Bethlehem
- And Bethlehem means the 'House of Bread'
- And what is one of the titles of Jesus? - 'the Bread of Life!'
- With God - there are no coincidences!

[PowerPoint 7c]

- It was the will of God to intervene in History to fix the broken relationship between humankind and God Himself. And at the heart of this plan to fix the broken relationship is the virgin birth. The **doctrine of the virgin birth is crucially important** (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23; Luke 1:27, 34). In response to Mary's question in v34 when she asks "How will this be - since I am a virgin?" the angel Gabriel says, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you" (v35). In Matthew's Gospel - the angel encourages Joseph to not fear marrying Mary with these words: "What is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 1:20). Matthew also states that the virgin "was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 1:18).

From these passages, it is certainly clear that Jesus' birth was the result of the Holy Spirit working within Mary's body. The immaterial (the Spirit) and the

material (Mary's womb) were both involved. Mary, of course, could not impregnate herself, and in that sense she was simply a "vessel." Only God could perform the miracle of placing the baby in the virgin Mary's womb!

Scripture teaches that Jesus was **fully human**, with a physical body like ours. This He received from Mary. At the same time, Jesus was **fully God**, with an eternal, sinless nature (John 1:14; 1 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 2:14-17.)

Jesus was not born in sin; that is, He had no sin nature - as Heb 7:26 says - *He is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the Heavens.*

And Romans 5:12, 17, 19 say - that a sinful nature is passed down from generation to generation through the father. The Virgin Birth circumvented the transmission of the sin nature and allowed the eternal God to become a perfect man - in the form of baby Jesus

This is crucial because only a perfect man - as Jesus is - could fulfill all of God's commandments and rules - and live a perfect life - and obey the will of God the Father in every way

The Apostle Paul puts it this way in Romans 5:19:

***19** For just as through the disobedience of the one man [Adam] the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man [Jesus] the many will be made righteous*

Jesus was born to live a perfect life and then die on the cross in obedience to the Father's will - to take the sin of the world on Himself - and to fix that broken relationship and make us right with God

In His obedience to the Father, Jesus is saying

"Your will be done, Father, on Earth - as it is in Heaven"

Our Response

So as we prepare for the birth of our Lord and Saviour - which we will hear about and celebrate tomorrow

What will our response be today?

[PowerPoint 8-Response]

Will we trust and believe every Word that God says - in His Holy Word - no matter how incredible it might seem?

[PowerPoint 8a]

The birth of Jesus happened just as God said it would - so we can also trust in the promise of forgiveness and eternal life that we receive by believing in Jesus - and we can also trust in the promise that Jesus will return one day. In fact we can trust in ALL of God's promises in His Word.

Now remember - the culture at the time of Jesus' birth - meant that if it was discovered that Mary was having a baby that was not Joseph's - she could face the death penalty (although not often carried out) - she would at least face being

an outcast for having a baby - out of marriage - and undergo suffering. But Mary shows no concern for that - she only wants to do what the Lord says.

Will we respond like Mary?

[PowerPoint 8b-Obey the master]

And say - Lord, I am your servant - literally - Lord, I am your slave - a slave cannot help but do the will of their master

Can we respond like Mary - and say, Lord, I am your slave - I will obey your every word, Lord and Master - no matter what the consequences might be

Can we respond and say - Lord, use me as you see fit - to accomplish your will through me!

[PowerPoint 8c-Ask God to use us to do His will]

You may ask what is the will of God for me?

How do I know?

Well remember - we have God's will and testament written down

And there are 2 fundamental things God wants from us:

1. First - Repent and believe - repent of our sin - say sorry to God - and believe Jesus - His Son came to fix our sin. If you haven't said sorry to God - today would be a good time to do so!
2. Second - As Micah 6:8 - says: *He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To **act justly** and to **love mercy** and to **walk humbly with your God.***

Will we act justly from this point forward - doing what is right in God's will

Will we love mercy - will we show compassion and love to all we come across

Will we walk humbly - not boastful or proud - but humbly walking with God -
seeking to live lives that always please Him

Can we submit to God - like Mary did?

And change the world's thinking which seems to be - *"Your will be changed God, to
suit my will"*

Can we join Mary - and say - "Your will be done on Earth, Lord, as it is in Heaven"

Let's pray...