

God's Unexpected Entry

Thomas Robinson, *Good News of God with Us 1*, December 1, 2019

Luke 1:41-55

⁴¹ When **Elizabeth** heard **Mary's** greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and **Elizabeth** was filled with the **Holy Spirit**. ⁴² In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! ⁴³ But why am I so favored, that **the mother of my Lord** should come to me? ⁴⁴ As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵ Blessed is **she who has believed** that **the Lord would fulfill his promises** to her!"

⁴⁶ And **Mary** said:

"**My soul glorifies the Lord**, ⁴⁷ *as my spirit rejoiced in God my Savior,*

⁴⁸ *because he was mindful of the humble state of his servant.*

*From now on all generations will call me **blessed**,*

⁴⁹ *for the Mighty One did great things for me! Holy is his name!*

⁵⁰ *His mercy extends from generation to generation for those who respect him.*

⁵¹ **He acted with great strength with his arm;**

*he scattered those who think with **arrogant hearts**.*

⁵² **He brought down rulers from their thrones**

*and lifted up **humble people**.*

⁵³ **He filled hungry people with good things**

*but sent **rich ones** away empty.*

⁵⁴ **He helped Israel his servant,**

*so as to remember **mercy** –⁵⁵ just as he promised our ancestors –
to **Abraham** and his seed forever."*

John 1:14-18

¹⁴ Now **the Word** became **flesh** and set his **tent** among us, and we saw his **glory**, a glory such as belongs to a **one and only** child of a **father**, full of **grace** and **truth**.

¹⁵ John testifies about him and cried, "This is the one of whom I said, 'The one who's coming after me ranks in front of me because **he was first before me**.'"

¹⁶ For **we all** received from **his fullness** – it's been **grace** on top of **grace!** ¹⁷ As the **Law** was given through Moses, **this grace and truth** came to be through **Jesus the Anointed King**. ¹⁸ No one has seen God – ever. **The One and only**, himself **God**, who is in the **heart of the Father**, has made him known.

Matthew 1:22-23

²² This whole event happened in order that what was said by the Lord through the prophet may be filled up, when he says: ²³ "*Behold, the virgin will become pregnant and will give birth to a son, and they will call his name Emmanuel*" [Isaiah 7:14] – which is translated, "God with us."

Exodus 40:34-35

³⁴ Then the cloud (of God's presence) covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of Yahweh filled the tent. ³⁵ Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud settled upon it, and the glory of Yahweh filled the tent.

Isaiah 52:7-10 Isaiah points to God's Kingdom as God returns to Zion.

⁷ How beautiful upon the mountains | are the feet of one who announces Good News, | who publishes Peace, who brings news of Good, | who announces Salvation, | who says to Zion, "Your God reigns as King." | ⁸ Your sentinels lift their voices, | together they sing for joy; | for before their very eyes they see | the return of Yahweh to Zion. | ⁹ Join together in the song, | you ruins of Jerusalem! | For Yahweh has comforted his people, | he has redeemed Jerusalem. | ¹⁰ Yahweh has bared his holy arm | before the eyes of all the nations; | and all peoples of the earth shall see | the salvation of our God!

Isaiah 53:1-5 Isaiah says God's mighty arm is manifested as a Suffering Servant.

¹ Who has believed what we have reported? | And to whom has the arm of Yahweh been revealed? | ² He grew up before him like a tender shoot, | and like a root out of parched earth. | He had no form, no majesty. | We looked at his appearance and did not desire him. | ³ He was despised and rejected by people, | a man who suffered and knew pain. | Like one from whom people hide their faces | he was despised, and we thought him worthless. | ⁴ But surely he has borne our pains | and carried our sorrows, | yet we ourselves considered him smitten, | struck down by God, and afflicted. | ⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions, | he was crushed for our iniquities; | on him was punishment for the sake of our peace, | and by his wounds we are healed.

Many Anticipations Become One Event

After disastrous exiles that ended kingdom in Israel & Judah— prophets and people anticipated the return of God in glory. When, how would he come? Restored Temple. New King-Messiah. Pure priest. Son of Man—people receive kingdom. Suffering servant—for people. Could Gentiles be included? Or a purified people? Or do we just keep up tradition?

Jesus, in his teaching & action, is the first to unify and embody all these anticipations.

People struggled to grasp uniting glorious Messiah with suffering servant, transformed temple, and included outsiders. In Jesus' death & resurrection they realized that Jesus was the very Advent of the One God, who used the human forms and anticipated images to show himself in the person of Jesus — the one and only Son, glory, and suffering.

Two Women Alone See God Changing His World

The Gospels help us grasp this challenging reality. Elizabeth and Mary, two women who carry impossible life — elder & virgin — they have been touched by the physical-spiritual, expected, surprising inbreaking of God. They become believers and prophetic visionaries. Elderly Elizabeth recognizes the "mother of my Lord" who trusts the Lord's promises.

Mary knows that if God has chosen her and Elizabeth to fulfill his mercy to Abraham, then he disregards all conventional powers of empire, religion, & society. He has already brought down the powerful and lifted the lowly. We watch how the story plays out. What these two women experience challenges every person: Can you see the reality of this unimaginably complex God who breaks into our limited vision in this powerless infant?

A New Tabernacle where God and Humans Meet

John tells the same story in other terms. He reaches back to creation, the Word, Life, Light coming into the world's darkness. Powerful concepts. But then, the Word became flesh, a person, someone you could eat dinner with, talk to by a well, whip with a scourge. But more, that person became the new Tent where God's Glory returned visible for his people.

John Bap. spoke in a riddle, but we've all drawn from his Fullness/Grace. God/Word in flesh allows the impossible, really knowing God, becoming children, new life, born from God.