

**THE GREATEST
DECISION**

LUKE 1:26-38



The Greatest Decision

- **“Take My Life, Lead Me, Lord”**

Take my life, lead me, Lord,
Take my life, lead me, Lord,
Make my life useful to Thee;

Take my life, lead me, Lord,
Take my life, lead me, Lord
Make my life useful to Thee.

Decisions that change the world and history

- History Magazine celebrating its 50th anniversary put together a list of the 50 greatest decisions that changed the world
 - 1961: JFK pledges to put a man on the moon and then did it in 1969
 - 1492: Spain funds the voyages of Christopher Columbus, the first European to discover the Caribbean and Americas
 - 1945: The US drops the atom bomb on Hiroshima, Japan killing 80,000 people instantly. Three days later, a second bomb was dropped on Nagasaki, Japan surrendered, and the Second World War came to an end
 - 9th Century: Gunpowder was adopted as a deadly new weapon discovered by Chinese alchemists attempting to create a substance that offered immortality

Decisions that change the world and history

- History Magazine celebrating its 50th anniversary put together a list of the 50 greatest decisions that changed the world
 - 1899: Wright Brothers set sights on flight and accomplished it four years later
 - Mid 1970s: Steve Jobs begins to build his first Apple computer

Decisions that change the world and history

- But there was one decision that changed not only history but eternity
 - It was made not by one with a great mind of learning, she didn't have a PhD
 - She didn't have great authority to move people with her voice
 - She didn't have great power to manipulate circumstances
 - She was just a simple, did-not-matter Jewish teenage girl living in a simple, did-not-matter place
 - Her decision changed not only her life and the life of her family, but it change the world and eternity
 - Her name, Mary the mother of Jesus

The Greatest Decision

- **Luke 1:1-4 NIV**, 1 Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled (*believed*) among us, 2 just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. 3 With this in mind, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I too decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, 4 so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.

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- **Luke 1:8-10 NIV**, 8 Once when Zechariah's division was on duty and he was serving as priest before God, 9 he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to go into the temple of the Lord and burn incense. 10 And when the time for the burning of incense came, all the assembled worshipers were praying outside.
 - **Luke 1:11-13 NIV**, 11 Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. 12 When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear. 13 But the angel said to him: "Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to call him John."
 - **Luke 1:18 NIV**, Zechariah asked the angel, "How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well along in years."

Luke 1:26-28 NIV, 26 In the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, 27 to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin’s name was Mary.

- “sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy” is a timestamp Luke uses
 - This is how meticulous Luke was in recording the details
- Two times here Luke mentions Mary was a virgin
- Mary was “pledged to Joseph” - betrothed

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- “God sent the angel Gabriel”, one of His most powerful, glorious angels that stands in His presence to this did-not-matter place and girl
 - **John 1:46 NIV**, “Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?” Nathanael asked.
 - There is no work of God that is unimportant or should be done carelessly
 - Your work that God leads you into matters even if no one notices
 - Or you are never recognized
 - Or no one else understands
 - It matters to God and He knows and understands

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- “The virgin's name was Mary”
 - Mary was not lost to God
 - God knew where Noah and his family was at
 - Moses was at on the back side of the mountain hiding from life
 - Jonah was at inside the sea creature from his rebellion toward God
 - Joseph was in prison falsely accused
 - Paul was at floating in sea

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- “The virgin’s name was Mary”
 - God not only knew where Mary was at, but He knew who she was
 - God knew the heart cry of Hannah for a child
 - A demon possessed man living in a cave longing for relief
 - A woman with an issue of blood for 12 years longing for healing

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- “The virgin's name was Mary”
 - God knew who Mary was, Where Mary was, and How Mary was
 - He knew her heart
 - God knew Mary's hurts, failures, sorrows, fears, dreams, insecurities
 - Would she have related to the Journey song, “Just a lonely girl, living in a lonely world, she took the midnight train going anywhere”

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- “The virgin's name was Mary”
 - What we do know is Mary was deeply devoted to God
 - She knew her God and she knew who she was
 - She believed and trusted God's Word, promises, and probably looked forward to the Messiah coming

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- “The virgin’s name was Mary”
 - There will be times in your life when you will wonder if the darkness will ever be lifted
 - You feel like throwing up your hands and screaming, “What’s the use!”
 - Will peace every come into my life
 - Will God’s answers ever come
 - Will I have strength to hold on
 - In those times remember a forgotten girl, in a forgotten town, named Mary

Luke 1:28-34 NIV, 28 The angel went to her and said, “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.” 29 Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. 30 But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. 31 You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, 33 and he will reign over Jacob’s descendants forever; his kingdom will never end.

- 34 “How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?”
- “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.”
 - She was highly favored because God was with her
 - As we Christians live our lives we are highly favored today

Luke 1:28-34 NIV, 29 Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be.

- “Mary was greatly troubled”
 - Have you ever tried to figure out what God is doing in your life
 - It’s troubling at times
 - We can’t figure out how God can accomplish His word, promise in our circumstances
- “Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God”
 - Twice the angel declared Mary favored by God
 - When the things of life make no human sense to us, fear is never far behind

Luke 1:28-34 NIV, 34 “How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?”

- “ How will this be”
 - I’m not sure she heard nor comprehended the part of who her child would be until later
 - Like the disciples not hearing Jesus saying He would rise on the third day
 - I hear your words Lord, but I am struggling understanding how they can come true in my life
 - Give me spiritual eyes to see, Lord because I’m struggling in my flesh
 - Give me spiritual trust to hang onto until my blessing is no longer by faith but sight

Luke 1:35-37 NIV, 35 The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. 36 Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. 37 For no word from God will ever fail.”

- If God were to explain to you what He is doing, you wouldn't understand it any better than Mary did
- The angel pointed Mary to His work and word in Elizabeth's life
 - We must let the workings of God in the lives of others encourage us on our path
 - Not that He will do it the same
 - But that He will work His will in every one of our circumstances to His glory and our blessing

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- “For no word from God will ever fail.”
 - If you grasp nothing else out of these verses grasp this
 - God keeps His word
 - God ensures His word is true and will accomplish His purpose
 - **Isaiah 55:11 NIV**, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty (*void, unfilled, less than willed*), but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

Luke 1:38, “I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “May your word to me be fulfilled.” Then the angel left her.

- “I am the Lord’s servant”
 - Mary’s first decision was to see herself as the Lord’s servant
 - The first response of a servant was to know their place and purpose, having a desire to please their master
 - How would they please their master?
 - Carrying out their instructions in the same way they would

Luke 1:38, “I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “May your word to me be fulfilled.” Then the angel left her.

- “May your word to me be fulfilled.”
 - Mary’s second decision was to accept what God was asking of her
 - She was well aware of the hardships facing her
 - No one would believe her, not even her family
 - No one would really understand what she would go through
 - She would be alone
 - She didn’t know how Joseph would respond, but she could guess
 - She was aware how she and the child would be looked upon in her world

Luke 1:38, “I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “May your word to me be fulfilled.” Then the angel left her.

- Mary did not have all the answers she would like but she knew this was from God, she was His servant, so she made the greatest decision in humanity by saying, “Yes Lord”
- The greatest decisions you will ever make in your life is saying, “I am the Lord’s servant”, “Yes, Lord”, “May your word be fulfilled in me”
- We need to look upon Mary with respect and honor while at the same time understanding she needed a Savior like we do

The Greatest Decision

- God loves to produce his best in the places and people we least expect
 - A murderer named Moses living on the backside of a mountain trying not to be noticed for forty years
 - A lowly shepherd boy named David forgotten by his family in the field
 - A herdsman and gatherer of figs named Amos
 - A young child named Jeremiah
 - A hater of Jesus and His church named Saul (*Paul*)
 - A town with a lousy reputation named Nazareth
 - A young virgin girl, living in that insignificant town, named Mary

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- God loves to produce his best in the places and people we least expect
 - And I can add my name to this list as you probably can as well
 - All of them were flawed, lacking in skills, incapable of doing what God was commanding – that is so much me
 - All of them walked through hardships, had to learn humility, were unsure, fearful at time, unprepared, but found themselves more than adequate in God's hands – that is so much us today

The Greatest Decision

- Where do you find yourself this morning?
 - Backside of a mountain like Moses, living your own life, trying to ignore God but not having much luck
 - Living with unfulfilled expectations and desires like Zachariah and Elizabeth
 - Dark fog of circumstances looking for God's path, answers like Joseph in prison
 - Life crushed from sinful living like King David and Bathsheba
- God knows where you are at, heart, grief, fears

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- Revelation 3:20 is normally associated with salvation, but it also applies to every phase of your life
 - **Revelation 3:20 NIV**, “Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.”
 - Jesus is seeking admittance into your life with all its current conditions and circumstances
 - **Matthew 11:28 NIV**, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”

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