

## God's Age-Old Promise of a Savior

*The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus." (Luke 1:30)*

God sent His Son. God sent His only Son. Jesus came to fulfill the promises of God. Here, in this passage, we find three basic promises, standing as figures for all the promises God has ever made.

Mary was commanded to name her Son, Jesus. This name means the Lord saves or the Lord is salvation. Jewish parents commonly named their sons Joshua as a tribute to the truth that the God of Israel was the God of salvation. God saves His people. That's His work. Saying that one knows Jesus means one trusts Him to rescue and save from sin and its consequences, from its power and presence. However, Jesus (the Greek form of Joshua) was given this name for a different reason. God sent His son, and Mary was to name Him, Savior, because He would save His people from their sins. He was the One who was promised, The Redeemer. He didn't only do the work of saving; salvation from sin was and is in Him, in God's gift, in a Person.

The promise of a redeemer and a savior is central to the entire Bible because it is the first promise that God makes after humanity fell into sin in Adam. (Genesis 3:15) After God gives this promise, those who called upon the name, trusting in Him for their salvation were constantly searching for the promise's fulfillment, which promised a person would be "the" salvation. The reality of the curse of sin, God's just judgment for sin, was inescapable for the people of God. They yearned for the day of salvation. But did they know that God's salvation was a person, was, in fact, a tiny babe. God's promise was anticipated generation after generation, as the Old Testament progressed. The nation cried for salvation, for God acting. But the thinking that God's salvation was wrapped in swaddling clothes and placed in an animal's feeding trough was far from their thinking.

When God's people were in exile, it looked like this promise could not be fulfilled. However, the Lord renewed His promise. Though the Israelites' circumstances were dire, though they had been unfaithful to God, and though their sins were as scarlet, the Lord made a new covenant with them and forgave and rescued them, promising that He would be their Savior. God commanded Mary to name her son "Jesus," not because God is salvation, though He is, but because this baby boy would be God our Savior, the only means of eternal salvation. Jesus was born to fulfill God's age-old promise of a Savior, and salvation. Salvation is not only God's work, He, Himself, is salvation. Whoever believes IN Him will not perish, but have eternal life.