

# Heavenly Minded

Luke 1:37



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**FOCAL Read Together** Luke 1:37 For with God nothing shall be impossible.

These words were spoken by the Angel Gabriel. This Angel came to earth during the days of the Prophet Daniel to foretell the coming of the Messiah (Daniel 9). On his second visit to earth Gabriel told **Zacharias** that his wife Elisabeth – well past child bearing years – would bear him a son. This child would be the prophesied herald of the Messiah, the

**Isaiah 40:3 ... voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.**

Elisabeth – a woman who should not have had any more children – was going to give birth to **John the Baptist**. John would be the Greatest Prophet this world had ever known, for John would announce the Coming Messiah.

One thing remained for Gabriel. This mighty Angel who “**stands in the presence of God**” (Luke 1:19) would have to tell both **Mary and Joseph** their part in the coming of the Messiah. God would use this couple to fulfill the long awaited prophecies. “**Unto us a Child is born. Unto us a Son is given. The Kingdom shall be upon His shoulder. He shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace**” (Isaiah 9:6). “**Look! A virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His Name Immanuel – God with us**” (Isaiah 7:14). Both Mary and Joseph would have to be submissive to God in order that this miracle come to pass. They would have to

be focused on the Will of God.

When Gabriel told Mary that she would bear the Messiah the first words out of her mouth were:

**Luke 1:34** “**How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?**”

The Angel told Mary (and I paraphrase here) “**This is something that God will do. God will come on you, and will take humanity through you. Just as God has already moved on your Cousin Elisabeth – she is six months pregnant – God is going to move on you. With God nothing shall be impossible!**”

The Bible – as well as common sense - tells us that *action always follows thought*. If your mind is set on right things then you will do the right thing. Mary was a believer in God. When God told her how He was going to use her, her initial response was “**How can this be, seeing I KNOW NOT A MAN**”. Like many believers Mary – bless her heart – missed the point. The power to change her condition was not in her, but in God. “**With God nothing shall be impossible**”. Mary, you will have to submit your body – and your thoughts – to God. Surrender to His leading! Mary responded

**Luke 1:38** ... Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word.

“**I will serve the Lord. I will be His handmaiden, and will do whatever He asks**”. Mary continued to follow the high ground, to keep her mind focused on pleasing

God. She lived one day at a time, one minute at a time, and always looking up. The Angel Gabriel told Mary that her cousin Elisabeth – barren and unable to have children – was now six months pregnant – with the child **John the Baptist**. Mary didn't doubt God, but she wanted to share the joy with her cousin. As she came into Elisabeth's house the Bible says that:

**Luke 1:41-43** {the infant John the Baptist} leaped in {Elisabeth's} womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost: {42} ... and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. {43} And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

“**Mary – you are carrying the Messiah! Why would someone as blessed as you come to see me?**” Oh, here was temptation! Mary could have reared back and said, “Yes, you're right! I am so much better than you, for God chose Me to bear the Messiah”. Did Mary do that? No, for her mind remembered the admonition of Gabriel. “**With God nothing shall be impossible**”. Mary was not the focal point, but God was. “**With God**”. From this worldview Mary replied:

**Luke 1:46-52** ... My soul doth magnify the Lord, {47} And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior. {48} For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. {49} For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name. {50} And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation. {51} He hath showed

**strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. {52} He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. ...**

Mary was not puffed up with pride. Her mind was on God, worshiping Him, praising Him, and magnifying Him for the great things He had done in her. She stayed with her cousin Elisabeth for three more months, probably to help her deliver John. Messiah was coming, and Mary was going to obey her God.

What's on your mind today?

## **1. Our Walking Must Be WITH God**

**FOCAL** Luke 1:37 For **with God nothing shall be impossible.**

When you know that you're walking with God the impossible becomes possible. When God spoke to Abraham and said:

**Genesis 12:1-2 ... Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee: {2} And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:**

God called Abraham, telling him “Leave all that you have and follow Me, and I will bless you”. What did Abraham do? He did what God told him to do. “Abraham departed as the Lord spoke unto him”. He

didn't know where he was going, but **Abraham walked WITH GOD**. With God nothing shall be impossible.

Abandoned by his brothers for dead and sold into Egyptian slavery, Joseph was the lowly servant of **Potiphar's wife (Genesis 39:1)**. One day while her husband was out this woman – looking at Joseph – said “**Come lie with me**”. Joseph had a choice. As a slave he could take the easy way out and lie down with this woman – and probably increase his own benefits in the household – or he could walk with God. What did Joseph do? The Scripture says that Joseph told this woman:

**Genesis 39:9 ... {Potiphar has not} ... kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?**

Was Joseph immediately blessed? No. He was cast into prison for thirteen years. But in time the God - of Whom nothing is impossible – raised Joseph to a place of power in Egypt second only to Pharaoh.

Because Joseph walked WITH God the nation Israel would be fed through a great famine, and would grow from a handful of people to over 6 million Jews!

Now consider Joseph, the husband of Mary. The Angel Gabriel went to Joseph and told him...

**Matthew 1:20-21 ... that which is conceived in {Mary} is of the Holy Ghost. {21} And she shall**

**bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name  
JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.**

Mary is now great with that Child. On top of everything **Caesar Augustus** decreed that all of Rome - and anything under its control - be taxed. Every male<sup>1</sup> was supposed to go to his city of birth to participate in the census. **Dr. A.T. Robertson** said "**each man went to the town where his family registry was kept**". Not the woman, but the man. The Scripture says:

**Luke 2:3** And all went to be taxed, **every one into HIS own city.**

A pregnant woman traveling eighty miles through rough terrain to a town called Bethlehem. Would YOU quit your job, pull up stakes, and happily make this journey?

Joseph had to go to Bethlehem. But Mary was "**great with child**" (**Luke 2:5**). She was ready to deliver this baby. The trip to Bethlehem was some *eighty miles*. This isn't eighty miles the way that we today measure miles. Eighty miles to us is about an hour - less if you speed - while sitting in a climate controlled vehicle. That's not the eighty miles that Joseph and Mary would have to travel. The eighty miles to Bethlehem would be over rough terrain, through dust and desert, extreme heat and terrible cold. The desert gets very cold at night!

<sup>1</sup> see Exodus 12:37; 2 Samuel 24:9; Matthew 14:21; Matthew 15:38. In ancient census (or numbering) the man - not the woman - was counted. Mary did not have to go to Bethlehem with Joseph merely to satisfy the census.

Joseph was a carpenter in Nazareth. He's have to drop everything to go to Bethlehem. At best he would be riding on the back of a bouncing donkey. That's a tough trip for a man alone. But a woman with Child? Why not leave Mary in Nazareth while Joseph went to Bethlehem?

Joseph loved the Lord. When the Angel of God told him:

**Matthew 1:21** ... **Mary shall bring forth a son, and THOU {Joseph} shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.**

Joseph was to be present at the birth. "**You shall call His Name JESUS**". Joseph had to go to Bethlehem. Put two and two together, and Mary *must* go with Joseph! **WITH GOD all things are possible.**

Joseph knew that he had to be present at the birth of Christ. It was Mary's duty to bear the Child. It was God's duty to insure that the birth happened at the right place and in the right time. It was Joseph's duty to watch over his wife, and to protect that Child when he was born. Joseph carried Mary to Bethlehem, **unknowingly fulfilling a prophecy given by Micah over 400 years before:**

**Micah 5:2** **But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel...**

When Mary

**Luke 2:7 ... brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger...**

It was an obedient Joseph who insured that there was a clean, dry place to lay that Child. It was Joseph who, on the eighth day (according to the Law of Moses) made sure that the baby Jesus was circumcised. It was Joseph who offered a sacrifice for the newborn Child, just as God decreed (**Luke 2:21-24**).

If Joseph had limited God then Christ would not have been born in Bethlehem. If Joseph had not taken Jesus to the Temple then neither **Simeon nor Anna** would have seen the Child. It was important that Joseph

**Proverbs 3:5 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.**

**Joseph trusted the Lord, not himself or his circumstances.** He trusted the Lord so much that he stayed in Bethlehem until God moved him – even though it took him away from Nazareth and his place of business.

Joseph kept both Mary and Child in Bethlehem for about a year, until God told him in a dream:

**Matthew 2:13 ...Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there**

**until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.**

**With God nothing shall be impossible!** Joseph took his family to Egypt and stayed there until God gave him leave to return to Nazareth. What a wonderful portrait of a faithful believer trusting and obeying God!

Dear friends, I am concerned. My concern is not for the economy, but for the Church and the Christian in America. Someone told me the other day that these are the darkest days of our nation since the early 70's. That may be true. But if God's Church pulls together and puts its collective mind on obeying the Lord we have no need to fear.

Dear Christians, we own the night because we are of the Light! Let's be like Joseph and walk WITH GOD so that Christ can come into our world!

The god of this world – Satan – has **blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine unto them (2 Corinthians 4:4)**. That's normal. It is not normal for the believer to go along with the world. We are IN the world but not OF the world. Think like Gabriel!

## **2. Our Thinking Must Be WITH God**

**FOCAL** Luke 1:37 For **with God nothing shall be impossible.**

You will not live this life with power until you align your thoughts with God. As you THINK so you DO.

If you believe along with the Angel Gabriel, **“with God nothing shall be impossible”**, then your life will reflect that. You will let God and not the circumstances that surround your life drive you. **Our thinking is to be WITH GOD – not ABOVE God or EQUAL WITH God.** The Bible tells us that **“as a man thinks in his heart, so he is” (Proverbs 23:7)**. Our thoughts drive our actions. Gabriel **“stands in the presence of God” (Luke 1:19)**, but never in his standing does he think that he is equal to or better than God. God is God, and he but an angel.

There was another Angel who was just as powerful as Gabriel was. He stood in the presence of God. This was the beautiful Arch Angel called **Lucifer, the Son of the Morning**. The Bible tells us that Lucifer's fall began when he began to believe that **ABOVE GOD nothing shall be impossible**. The Scripture says:

**Isaiah 14:12-14** **How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! {13} For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: {14} I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.**

Where did Lucifer – who become known as Satan –

where did he go wrong. **It all started in the heart**. From the heart **Lucifer made several “I WILL” statements**. Do you notice any of these statements in your heart, or in the hearts of anyone you know?

Lucifer – the fallen Archangel who led Adam away from God – set himself above God. The evil in his mind led to an outward revolt in Heaven against God.

**“I will ascend into Heaven”**. I have every right to be in Heaven – God cannot keep me out! I will ascend into Heaven and demand my rightful place, regardless as to what He thinks.

**“I will exalt my throne above the stars of God, and will sit upon the Highest Place above the congregation”**. I'm better than those other **“stars”**, those other angels around me. After all, I am ME. I'm good enough on my own to be where God is. As I look around I see so many that fall far short of Me. Why shouldn't I have the best – after all, I am the best!

**“I will be like the most High”**. Who is God to tell me anything, for I'm as good as He is. How dare He tell me something is forbidden, sinful, or required. I will be LIKE the Most High. I'll make myself God, and then I'll not have to obey Him at all.

When man or angel thinks great things of himself ABOVE or APART FROM God, when we drift from the bedrock truth that

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then our world starts to fragment. What caused the worldwide flood of Noah? The Bible says that

**Genesis 6:5 And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.**

Did you read that? “Every **IMAGINATION of the THOUGHTS of his heart were only EVIL CONTINUALLY**”. Here is the beginning of the end. When man begins to think that he is greater than God and that his laws are greater than God's Laws, then society begins to disintegrate. Our Lord Jesus said:

**Matthew 15:17-20 Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? {18} But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. {19} For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: {20} These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashed hands defileth not a man.**

The source of evil – murder, sexual sin, thievery, lying, blasphemy of God – is what is in the human heart.

The mind divorced from God will always sink to the lowest level, but the mind willing to be WITH GOD will always rise above the petty and the mean.

**ILLUSTRATION** Atheists have put an advertisement on the side of buses in Washington State trying to get people *not* to believe in God. They have a picture of an attractive woman dressed up in a Santa suit. Underneath her picture are the words “Why believe in a god? Just be good for goodness sake”. If that were possible then why haven't more people done it? If you can just “be good for goodness sake” then why is our crime rate so high in America? Why are children killing children in our schools, and children aborting babies from their wombs? The Bible rightly says “**The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God**”. **They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good**” (Psalm 14:1). There is no one more foolish than the person who will not turn to God. God in love calls to the whole world, saying:

**Isaiah 55:6-9 Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: {7} Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. {8} For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. {9} For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.**

God waits to pardon. He wants to pardon, to bless, to strengthen, to guide. God is higher than we are. As we are to the amoeba, God is to us. And yet this great God, immense and powerful. **In God we live, and move, and have our being (Acts 17:28). As the Heavens are higher than the earth God's ways are higher than our ways.** And yet this Great God cares for us. He reaches out to us, and calls us, and says “turn and follow Me”. When we walk down the sidewalk we often walk on ants and bugs, killing these little creatures with scarcely a thought. God however does not step on us. He loves us, and calls even the atheist who despises and mocks Him to salvation. Though

**Psalms 10:4 The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts.**

Nonetheless the wicked is in God's thoughts. God wants to raise the wicked from a life of death. He calls to all, saying “**turn and live. Turn from your evil ways, and turn to me. Turn your thoughts from yourselves and think of Me. Turn your eyes upon Me.**”

### **3. Know Peace By Knowing – And Obeying – God**

**FOCAL** Luke 1:37 For with God nothing shall be impossible.

I read a recent article in USA Today® that is somewhat disturbing. I quote:

“**Most American religious believers, including most**

**Christians, say eternal life is not exclusively for those who accept Christ as their Savior, a new survey finds. Of the 65% of people who held this open view of heaven's gates, 80% named at least one non-Christian group — Jews, Muslims, Hindus, atheists or people with no religion at all — who may also be saved, according to a new survey released today by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life.”**

This is very dangerous thinking for it has no foundation in the Word of God. God will save anyone – that's true – but the Bible is also very clear

**John 3:16-18 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. {17} For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. {18} He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.**

Faith alone in Christ alone saves. A Christian is someone who turns away from all other gods and goddesses and, repenting, turns to follow the Lord Jesus Christ. **He that believeth on Him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the Only Begotten Son.**

God has given but ONE SOURCE for salvation. If a Jew

– Orthodox or otherwise – rejects Jesus Christ as Savior then he, upon death, goes to a place of eternal punishment. If a well intentioned Hindu dies – no matter what good works he may have done in this life – and has rejected Jesus Christ as Savior, that person goes to a place of condemnation. God's standard is absolute: believe in Jesus, or be lost for all eternity.

A young man came to Jesus some thirty years later asking the question, **“what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?”** He was of the opinion he could be good enough or do a good work and get into Heaven. Jesus, looking into the heart of that man, saw what He sees in many people's hearts today. As Americans we worship THINGS. We love THINGS. We put THINGS above God in our thinking. As **Pastor Rick Warren** once said, **“We buy things we don't need with money we don't have to impress people we don't even like”**. That's very true. Jesus looked at this young man and said:

**Matthew 19:21 ... If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.**

That's a radical change for a life hooked on riches. Yet the Bible says that **“when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions”**. His mind was on riches, not on God. He traded his soul for trinkets. Jesus said **“It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God”**. The disciples then asked, **“Who then can be saved?”**. Christ's answer

was the same as Gabriel's was to Mary. Jesus said, **“With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible”**.

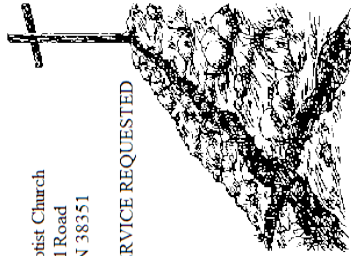
Salvation is possible with God. Any of you can come to Him and be saved. Turn from your gods and goddesses. Turn from wrong thinking, and – through the power of God – look upward. Oh Holy Spirit, that You would lead everyone here today to realize that

**Psalms 145:18 ... The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth.**

Call upon Him. Believe in Him. Surrender to Jesus, and you shall be saved! May God touch your hearts with His Word!

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



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with God nothing shall be impossible.**

Isaiah 40:3; Luke 1:19; Isaiah 9:6; Luke 1:34; Luke  
1:38; Luke 1:41-43; Luke 1:46-52 \_\_\_\_\_

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**1. Our Walking Must Be WITH God**

Luke 1:37; Genesis 12:1-2; Genesis 39:1; Genesis  
39:9; Matthew 1:20-21; Luke 2:3; Luke 2:5; Matthew  
1:21; Micah 5:2; Luke 2:7; Luke 2:21-24; Proverbs  
3:5; Matthew 2:13; 2 Corinthians 4:4 \_\_\_\_\_

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**2. Our Thinking Must Be WITH God**

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**3. Know Peace By Knowing – And Obeying – God**

Luke 1:37; John 3:16-18; Matthew 19:21; Psalms  
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