

Adjustable Jesus

New parents are so creative when it comes to celebrating the announcement and arrival of a new baby, aren't they? Have you ever wondered who announced Jesus's arrival?

Let's take a look at the birth announcement of Jesus, the Son of God:

Luke 1:26-31 (KJV)

26 And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, **27** To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. **28** And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. **29** And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. **30** And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. **31** And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus.

Now, I do think that the majority of new parents are pretty creative in their methods of sharing the news of their newborn, but I think having the angel, Gabriel, make the announcement for you might be just a tad bit better than any other way, right? Give me a choice of a cute, fancy Facebook post or Gabriel and I'll pick Gabriel every time.

Who is Gabriel?

He stands in the presence of God.

Luke 1:19 (KJV)

19 And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings.

He was sent by God to three different people:

Daniel – prophetic message about Jesus, the Anointed One (Daniel 9:20).

Zachariah – about the birth of John (Luke 1:19-20).

Mary – to foretell the birth of Jesus (Luke 1:26-28).

Few things in life excite us more than to hear that a baby is coming to our family! And then the day finally comes; a baby is born! And almost immediately, the moment the baby is born, the parents are given the challenging task of molding the life of that baby and shaping them to become incredible young people and adults someday.

As they grow, they embrace our values and morals and they, to some extent, take on our characteristics, our lifestyle. We teach them about our political views, our religious perspective, our worldview and our family traditions become their traditions. They become mini-me's.

Sometimes people say, "You're just like your daddy!" or "You're just you're your mother!"

Whether you realize it or not, good, bad, or indifferent, you have enormous influence on those little babies that are born into your family! Most of the time, those babies become the adults that you raised and influenced them to be.

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Tomorrow, we will celebrate the birth of Jesus, a baby born for the hope of the world, 2,000 years ago! And while it's a wonderful thing to have influence on your own children during their formative years, I think we sometimes blur that same line in our relationship with Jesus.

I think a lot of Christians today still only see Jesus as a baby in a manger, and not as a Savior who died on the cross, rose from the grave, and intercedes for us at the right hand of God today.

Of course, everyone here knows that Jesus died on the cross, but a lot of Christians relate to Jesus as though he is still in a manger. Like he's a Jesus that we can influence to be what we want him to be, instead of a resurrected Jesus who influences our lives to become what he wants them to become.

I have no doubt that our culture has influenced our perception of Jesus and who He actually is. These days, when someone says, "*I have a personal relationship with Jesus,*" it's hard to tell which Jesus they are speaking of...

Are they talking about baby Jesus in a manger that our society and culture has determined to still be in his formative years? We can shape him to be any kind of Jesus we want him to be?

Here's our problem: when many people speak of a "Personal Jesus," what they really desire is an Adjustable Jesus. They want to be disciples on their own terms; to calibrate their religion to a more relaxing, luxurious setting; to throw out the difficult, challenging aspects of belief, and put something customized and convenient in its place. When these folks say "my personal relationship with Jesus," all that really registers is the "my."

When you say, "I love Jesus," which Jesus are you talking about? Are you speaking of a formative, baby Jesus that you can adjust to fit your lifestyle? Or the resurrected Jesus – who said, *"If any man, woman, boy or girl will be my disciple, they must take up their cross and follow me."*

The thing is: there's a lot to be said for paying attention to the details. When it comes to celebrating the birth of Jesus, we really should cross the T's and dot the I's. Tomorrow morning, when your family begins to gather to remember the day Jesus was born, Celebrate like never before! Celebrate the details of His birth; Gabriel's announcement, Mary's immaculate conception by the Holy Spirit, the shepherds and the wise men and the star that guided them, Mary and Joseph using a manger, a cattle trough for his first cradle. Pay attention to the details and celebrate like never before!

But when the birthday party is over, when your cleaning up the wrapping paper, taking down the tree and Nativity, don't you dare leave Jesus in that manger! Don't think of him as a baby that you can develop into the Jesus you want him to be. He's not an Adjustable Jesus!

When God sent Jesus into the world, born of a virgin, He already had a plan for who he would be, what his life on earth would be like, when he would embrace his ministry, how he would live and ultimately die. He sent him to save sinners. God determined the parameters of Jesus' life.

Jesus doesn't live in our heart on our terms. We can't mold him, form him, and steer him the way we want him to go, like we have done with our own children. We have to embrace the Jesus God sent him to be.

If I could give you one gift before you go it would be this: that you pursue Jesus with all your heart, mind, and soul. That you never give up on knowing Him, because He will never give up on you. When you discover Jesus for who He really is, you realize that he is everything you will ever need in this life and in the next.

Seek Jesus! If you will do that, you will find that Jesus is all you need because he will be everything you need him to be when you need him to be it.

1 Chronicles 22:19 (KJV)

"Now set your heart and your soul to seek the Lord your God..."