

Rev. Paul A. Hottinger

Beyond Our Calendars Annunciation of the Lord Tuesday, March 25, 2014 8:15 AM
Is 7:10-14; 8:10; Heb 10:4-10; **Lk 1:26-38** (Gabriel is announcing something totally new and Mary is accepting it.)

The religion of Israel was rich in various sources of **life and light and hope and encouragement.**

Now we see in this story that Luke tells us about Gabriel coming to Mary that **many of these currents are beginning to coalesce** because apparently for a long time these currents, these various sources of life and faith and hope in Israel, existed almost independently. Surely the most important from an historical viewpoint was the **rabbinic Torah traditions** and they dominated for the most part the thinking of many people and were not too concerned with other currents. But here we have other currents. We have the **Messianic current, the Messianic prophecies** that go back to the Book of Chronicles outside of the Duetermistic, law-oriented tradition. This is a prophecy that said that David's offspring would reign forever. Now historically that would be rather difficult to show possible. So it's already moving beyond what we know of as history.

In fact, **many of the prophecies** were not things that we could really put on the calendar. It isn't something to be happening any day now, but **something that would happen only in a new kind of age beyond our calendars.** That is what is now being talked about. That new eon is now coming when God's prophecies would take root in new and unexpected ways. Jesus himself reflected that thinking when he said to the woman at the well, "A new eon is coming when you will worship God neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem but in Spirit and truth; indeed it is already here." So indeed, **it's already prophesied here by Gabriel that that new age is coming and God's promises are about to be fulfilled.** So it's really more a setting of the stage than it's anything else.

Mary for her part is not concerned with theology. She doesn't say, well, how can this be because of this law or that, or this tradition or that, or this reason or that. She says, "How can this be, I have no relations with a man?" She is merely concerned about practical matters.

She is willing to accept what God is going to do. She doesn't quite know how, but she is not disbelieving. She just doesn't know how, but she is willing. So she ends her comments:

"Behold I am that handmaid of the Lord."

And ultimately, that has to be the answer of all those who want to believe God. Today we are told that many of the young people do not identify with institutional Christianity. Well, this isn't about anything institutional. This is about a movement that goes way beyond institutions. This is not things falling into place, really. **It's about a whole new placement of events in our history.** Gabriel is announcing something totally new and **Mary is accepting it. That has to be the authentic response of anyone really seeking God.** "Behold I am that handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word."