

Expositor's Greek Testament

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Luke 1:35

And the angel answered and said unto her, *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.*

Luke 1:35. Πνεῦμα Ἅγιον: without the article because a proper name = the well-known Holy Spirit, say some (Meyer, Farrar), but more probably because the purpose is not to indicate the person by whom, etc., but the kind of influence: *spirit* as opposed to flesh, holy in the sense of separation from all fleshly defilement (Hofmann, J. Weiss, Hahn).—δύναμις ὑψίστου: the power of the Most High, also without article, an equivalent for π. ἄ., and more definite indication of the cause, the power of God. Note the use of ὑψίστος as the name of God in Luke 1:32, here, and in Luke 1:76. Feine (*Vorkanonische Überlieferung des Lukas*, p. 17) includes ὁ ὑψίστος, ὁ δυνατός (Luke 1:49), ὁ δεσπότης (Luke 2:29), ὁ κύριος (Luke 1:6; Luke 1:9; Luke 1:11, etc.), all designations of God, among the instances of a Hebraistic vocabulary characteristic of chaps. 1 and 2. The first epithet recurs in Luke 6:35 in the expression “sons of the Highest,” applied to those who live heroically, where Mt. has “children of your Father in heaven”.—ἐπελεύσεται, ἐπισκιάσει: two synonyms delicately selected to express the divine substitute for sexual intercourse. Observe the parallelism here: “sign of the exaltation of feeling. The language becomes a chant,” Godet. Some find poetry throughout these two first chapters of Lk. “These songs ... doubtless represent reflection upon these events by Christian poets, who put in the mouths of the angels, the mothers and the fathers, the poems which they composed” (Briggs, *The Messiah of the Gospels*, p. 42. Even the address of Gabriel to Zechariah in the temple, Luke 1:13-17, is, he thinks, such a poem).—τὸ γεννώμενον ἅγιον, the holy thing—holy product of a holy agency—which is being, or about to be, generated = the embryo, therefore appropriately neuter.—υἱὸς Θεοῦ, Son of God; not merely because holy, but because brought into being by the power of the Highest.