

November 27, 2022

Day 1: Luke 1:26-27

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary.

Gabriel came in the 6th month of Elizabeth's pregnancy. Elizabeth is John the Baptist's mother and related to Mary. Mary was engaged to Joseph but he had not come to take her as his wife. In those days a young woman could be engaged for a year before the husband would come to take her to his home. In those days a person's lineage came through the father. The savior was to come from the line of David - Joseph was of that line.

Question: Elizabeth is John the Baptist's mother. Who is his father?

Challenge: Angels are messengers of God. Can you think of a time when someone was an angel to you?

Scripture: Luke 1:5-25

Day 2: Luke 1:28-29

And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.' But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.'

In the annunciation it is important to note that the main character is the gracious God of Israel, not Mary or the angel. Both statements, "Greetings, favored one!" and "The Lord is with you" are made to calm Mary. She is told first that this visitation by God is because she is favored and that God has no evil intent in naming her. Perhaps she recalled the words of Jeremiah 29:11 (For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope). Of course finding favor with God usually means there is work to be done (see Genesis 6:9).

Question: Why might she be afraid of a greeting from God?

Challenge: Be honest and not too modest - Would a messenger from God say to you, "You have found favor with God"?

Scripture: Ruth 2:5-15

Day 3: Luke 1:31-33

And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.'

At this point the conception has not taken place. The name Mary is to give the child means 'God with us.' This Jesus will be known as the Son of the Most High, who will be given the throne of David. When we hear these words we think of the adult ruling a kingdom, however think for a moment of a newborn. Don't we reorganize our whole life to fit into the infant's needs? Don't they reign over our lives? In fact, healthy adults will willingly give their hearts to the little one. The infant in the cradle sits on the throne of our hearts and reigns over our lives. Just as an infant reigns over our life because we give our hearts to them so does Jesus reign over our life because we give our hearts to Him.

Question: Do you think that Mary thought that the conception would take place right then and in the normal way?

Challenge: Can you think of another story in the Bible where God sent a messenger to tell someone they would have a baby even though it was past time for her to be pregnant?

Scripture: Genesis 18:5-15

Day 4: Luke 1:34-35

Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' The angel said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God.'

Mary demonstrates her piety by not wondering why she will be with child but how it will happen. She trusts God will not harm her but still she wonders "how can this be"? The Holy Spirit had come upon the prophets and they had spoken. The Spirit of God had come upon the people of Israel as they were in the wilderness and led them. Now the Holy Spirit will come upon Mary and she will become pregnant and her child will be called Holy.

Question: Where was Joseph when Mary was being visited by the angel?

Challenge: Is it important to you that Mary be a virgin when Jesus was born, or not?

Scripture: Isaiah 7:9-19

Day 5: Luke 1:36-37

And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.'

The fact that nothing is impossible with God is emphasized by mentioning that Elizabeth is also pregnant when she is supposed to be well past the age when pregnancy was possible. We ought to remember that what basically God created was life in a variety of forms. If God can create life out of nothing, surely God can cause life to begin in a woman well past childbearing age and in a young woman that was not taken to her husband's house.

Question: You have read Luke 1:1-25 - can you guess how old Elizabeth is?

Challenge: Can you think of one seemingly impossible thing that has happened to you? Can you think of one that happened in history?

Scripture: Hebrews 11:1-11

Day 6: Luke 1:38

Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.' Then the angel departed from her.'

The child Jesus did not become the Son of God through a special revelation, a gradual realization, and a life after death experience but by conception. He is God's Son through birth. Both Mary and Joseph had to accept a lot to follow what God wanted them to do and be. In different ways they both proclaim they were willing to do whatever God asked. The next nine months were going to be very interesting for Mary and we can see why she went to see her relative Elizabeth. Elizabeth was perhaps the only person who could believe what happened to Mary was God's doing.

Question: Why was Mary so willing to follow the angel's orders?

Challenge: When have you used similar words - "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word"?

Scripture: Deuteronomy 31:3-13