

Gabriel Visits Mary

Luke 1 v 26-38

Context:

As we continue our journey through Advent we turn to a classic Christmas Bible passage! Luke, a medical doctor and travelling companion of the apostle Paul, begins his Gospel by establishing the historical basis for what he is about to write (1 v 1-4). Everything he writes about Jesus he learned from eyewitnesses and then verified by his own research. So, we can be confident of the truth and reliability of what we are about to study in 1 v 26-38. In fact, Luke probably received it from Mary herself.

Observation:

1. When does this event begin according to v 26?
2. Who does God send and to where does he send him in v 26?
3. To whom is he sent (v 27)?
4. What greeting does he give on his arrival (v 28)?
5. How did Mary react in v 29?
6. What stunning news is announced in v 30-33?
7. What practical problem does Mary come up with in v 34?
8. What solution does Gabriel give in v 35?
9. What example does he give to encourage Mary to believe him in v 36?
10. How does he conclude his speech in v 37?
11. How does Mary respond in v 38?

Meaning:

1. To what does the sixth month refer in v 26? – see v 36 for a clue.
2. From your knowledge of the Old Testament, why should the fact that Mary was a virgin and Joseph was a descendant of David arouse our interest (v 27)?
3. Why should Gabriel's greeting cause Mary such concern (v 28-29)?
4. What is so significant about the name to be given to the child (v 31)?
5. Referring to Isaiah 9 v 6-7, why are Gabriel's words in v 32-33 so significant?
6. Gabriel's solution to Mary's practical objection (v 35) sounds simple, but is hugely theologically and scientifically profound! It is the means by which John's words in John 1 v 14 came true. So, how do you think it happened – how did the eternal Word unite with Mary in such a way as to produce Jesus, so that he would be both fully human and fully divine?
7. From your knowledge of the rest of the Gospel story, what would Mary's agreement to God's plan (v 38) mean for her life, both positive and negative?

Application:

1. How do we feel when God gives us a difficult task to do for Him? What can we learn from Mary's response?
2. How do we get our minds around the complex teaching about the humanity and divinity of Jesus? Do we find it spiritually inspiring or intellectually embarrassing?
3. If it took God hundreds of years to fulfil his promise to send the Messiah and yet Paul says it happened 'when the time had fully come' (see Galatians 4 v 4), how might this encourage us to trust God for the biblical promises he hasn't yet fulfilled?

Pray:

- For courage to respond to God's call as Mary did.
- For faith to believe the complex teaching about the person of Jesus in spite of scepticism.