



Anticipation

A four part series leading up to
Christmas
Celebrating the season of
Advent.
Part Two

LET IT BE

The leadup to Christmas is a busy time of year as we prepare for the “big day,” when amongst other things we are anticipating is that we will have some peace. Just how effective though are our strategies to get peace, how can our anticipation be filled?

This is the second of our series on anticipation as we follow the advent calendar preparing us to celebrate Christmas. The first Sunday of Advent was focused on hope, the hope that we have that Jesus came into the world as the saviour, and the hope that we have that He will come again as He promised. This week we turn our anticipation to peace.

26 In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, 27 to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. 28 And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favoured one, the Lord is with you!" 29 But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. 30 And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. 31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. 32 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 father David, 33 and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

34 And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?"

35 And the angel answered 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 called holy—the Son of God. 36 And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. 37 For nothing will be impossible with God."

38 And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

Luke 1:26–38 (ESV)

Commentary

Previously the angel Gabriel had visited Zechariah at the altar in the temple at Jerusalem, but in this passage we find Him visiting a young woman far from the epicenter of Judaism. The belief was that the further you were away from the temple the less righteous you were, so Gabriel's mission to Nazareth should immediately peak our interest. Why here? Who is he there to see?

Not only is he sent to a remote part of Judea but he is sent to a young woman, who, from outside appearances would seem to have nothing to offer God's plan of bringing the Messiah into the world.

The passage has many parallels to the previous passage of Gabriel's visit to Zechariah; he/she was troubled, the angel said to him/her do not be afraid, God sent.

We do not know the age of Mary, but in all likelihood she was in her early teens, she was betrothed to be married to Joseph, which meant she had already entered into a binding covenant of marriage, only it had not been consummated. The bride would wait until her husband had prepared a house for them to live in and then would come and get her. This is what Mary was anticipating when Gabriel showed up.

Gabriel's greeting reveals God's determination of her status not her own or others. Needless to say Mary is troubled, but she is told not to be because she has found favour with God. Again, it is God who has chosen her to deliver His grace to the world not because she is special but because God is sovereign. Mary has been chosen by God to have a baby, but not just any baby, but one who inherit the kingship of David and rule over Jacob for eternity.

**ISRAEL AT THE TIME
OF JESUS**

1ST CENTURY AD



When Gabriel had visited Zechariah his response had been “how will I know,” Mary’s is “how will this be?” Zechariah responded with doubt, Mary responded with curiosity, as clearly she thought the angel was talking about the present not about some time in the future when she would be with Joseph. She is a virgin, and babies aren’t conceived by themselves!

Gabriel tells her this conception will be miraculous, the power of the Holy Spirit will come upon her and bring this life into being in her womb. The Holy Spirit was there in the beginning of Genesis hovering over the waters, creating out of nothing, so its no trouble at all for Him to step into the world and create life, although He is not creating Jesus, who is pre existent before the incarnation, He creating the body for Him.

Gabriel adds some extra proof, in that Mary’s cousin Elizabeth, who as everyone knows was well past the age of conception, is six months pregnant, although this pregnancy was miraculous it was not supernatural.

Mary accepts all the angel has told, “let it be me according to your word.” She declares herself to be the “servant of the Lord.”

Group Study

Start this week's group by reviewing your responses to last week's study, how you applied them during the week, what you discovered as you applied them. What were the successes and difficulties, and what adjustments will you need to make?

How are you anticipating peace this Christmas season?

What will it look like?

Where will you find it?

If an angel showed up this Christmas with a message from the Lord do you think it would add or subtract from your peace?

What are your impressions of Mary?

According to Roman Catholicism, Mary is “the all-holy ever-virgin Mother of God” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, hereafter referred to as “CCC” 721), the “Queen over all things” (CCC 966), our “Advocate, Helper, Benefactress, and Mediatrix” (CCC 969), who is “full of grace” (CCC 722), the “Mother of God and our mother” (CCC 2677), the “new Eve” (CCC 726), and the “seat of wisdom” (CCC 721). She had no original sin (CCC 508), and never committed sin (CCC 493). She is second only to her Son” (Vatican II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, par. 66) and sits “on the right hand of the majesty on high” (Pope Pius X, *Ad Diem Illum Laetissimum*, 14). In fact, “no man goeth to Christ but by His

Mother” (Pope Leo 13th, Octobri Mense). It was Mary who “crushed the poisonous head of the most cruel serpent and brought salvation to the world” (Pope Pius IX, Ineffabilis Deus). It is she who “delivers our souls from death” (CCC 966), and “continues to bring us the gifts of eternal salvation” (CCC 969). “Mary, by her spiritual entering into the sacrifice of her divine son for men, made atonement for the sins of man,” (Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma4, Ott, page 213). Therefore, we can “entrust all our cares and petitions to her” (CCC 2677), “give ourselves over to her now” (CCC 2677), “pray to her” (CCC 2679), and have devotion to her (CCC 971). She was “taken up body and soul into the glory of heaven” (CCC 974). When speaking of the Church, “we can find no better way to conclude than by looking to Mary,” (CCC 972). In her, the church is holy (CCC 867). “Mary is the Church’s model of faith and charity” (CCC 967). Finally, in paradise the church gathers “around Jesus and Mary” (CCC 1053).

Matt slick <https://carm.org/catholic/catholic-mary-summary>

How does this compare to the Biblical view of Mary?

See Luke 1:46-49, Luke 2:6-19, Luke 2:34-35, Luke 2:41-51, John 2:1-11, Mark 3:31-35, John 19:26, Acts 1:14, Galatians 4:4

When Jesus called you to be His disciple, the power of the Holy Spirit gave birth to a new you, how have you responded to His authority over your life.

What areas do you find it easy to submit to and what areas do you still struggle and fight?

Briefly Read Judges 6:11-36

How does Gideon's call compare to Mary's?

Why does God call such unlikely people?

Why might God's call not bring you peace in the way you anticipate it?

Personal study

Mary refers to herself as the "servant of the Lord," or literally a "slave girl" to the Lord. Reflect on the following scriptures and how you are a "servant of the Lord.

7 "Will any one of you who has a servant plowing or keeping sheep say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come at once and recline at table'? 8 Will he not rather say to him, 'Prepare supper for me, and dress properly, and serve me while I eat and drink, and afterward you will eat and drink'? 9 Does he thank the servant because he did what was commanded? 10 So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty.' "

Luke 17:7-10 (ESV)

Reflection

42 And Jesus called them to him and said to them, “You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. 43 But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, 44 and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. 45 For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Mark 10:42–45 (ESV)

2 So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, 2 complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. 3 Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. 4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. 5 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9 Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2:1–11 (ESV)

KIDS CORNER

Luke 1:26-38

1. What are some things that make you nervous or afraid?



Sometimes our lives can make us pretty anxious. Maybe we get nervous around a bunch of new people. Maybe fears of danger, disappointment, or discomfort haunt our thoughts and feelings. When Mary found out that she was going to be Jesus' mom, she could have been very anxious. There were so many things that could have gone wrong, and she had so much to lose! However, six words which the angel spoke offered her peace: "nothing shall be impossible with God." You see, God knows that we face some tough situations, but He also knows that He is big enough to handle them. He knows that our lives give us plenty of reasons to worry, but He asks us to trust Him since He is bigger, stronger, and more reliable than anything we could imagine. When we trust that God is great enough to take care of us and do what's best for us, we can feel comforted, secure, and peaceful. Yes, there will always be reasons to worry, but since our God is

so powerful, there are even more reasons to have peace.

2. When you think of how big God is, do you feel more peaceful?

