

TITLE AND NUMBER: 163: Mary's encounter with Gabriel



REFERENCE AND KEY VERSE(S): Luke 1:26-38

The angel went to her and said, 'Greetings, you who are highly favoured! The Lord is with you.' Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favour with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. (v28-31)

'How will this be,' Mary asked the angel, 'since I am a virgin?' The angel answered, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. (v34-35)

For no word from God will ever fail.' 'I am the Lord's servant,' Mary answered. 'May your word to me be fulfilled.' Then the angel left her. (v37-38)

What does this Bible passage tell us?

The vows made at any wedding ceremony are not to be taken lightly. In Mary's and Joseph's time, the agreement to be married was a serious matter and any engagement or betrothal could only be cancelled by divorce, even though they were not living together. Mary, who people believe was only a teenager, was told by the Archangel Gabriel that she was very special to God and was to bear a son and He was to be called Jesus. Can you imagine how her brain spun! In Mary's culture at that time, being unmarried and pregnant was a disgrace – especially as Joseph was not even the father. And yet the archangel said she was highly favoured by God. None of it would have made sense to her.

However, as it all began to sink in, the words spoken to her by the Archangel became very precious: 'Do not be afraid...the Holy Spirit will come upon you... the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.' Could all this be true? But the Archangel also told her that her cousin Elizabeth, who was very old, was also pregnant - a fact that Mary later found to be true. You can read about the great excitement when Mary visited Elizabeth in verses 39-45.

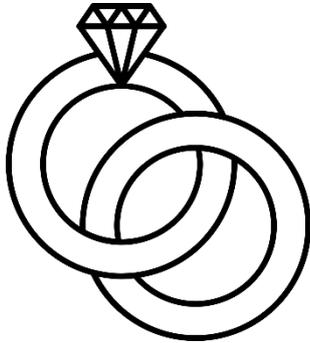
Joseph was worried, but God reassured him in a dream that he should marry and care for Mary. Together they saw the promise of God fulfilled.

Sometimes, in our own experiences, we are perplexed by what God allows to happen to us. But, like Mary, we can recognise that God has a plan, even if it seems to be beyond our understanding. We can, like Mary, say 'Lord do it your way.' After all, nothing is impossible with God.

Reflections:

- If you were Mary or Joseph and heard what the Archangel Gabriel had to say, how would you react to what he said?
- It is wonderful to know that Jesus knows all about our humanity. After all, He was human, too.
- What situations are you struggling with? God always has a plan. (Jeremiah 29:11)

Write or draw something you read in this Bible Study that stood out to you.



Do you have any questions about this week's Bible Study?



How does this week's message apply to your life?



What can we learn about God from this week's passage?



What would you like to ask God this week?



Has God responded to your prayers this week in the way you had hoped for? It's okay to talk to God about this.

