

Christmas

Advent 4 : God's promises to Mary

Foundation

Bible passage: Luke 1.26-38

On the fourth Sunday in Advent, which can range from 18th to 24th December, we remember what God promised to Mary through the Angel Gabriel.

Matthew tells us about how Joseph found out that his betrothed would have a child but not how Mary discovered the fact. He also quotes the prophecy through Isaiah (7.14) that a virgin would conceive and bear a son who people would call Immanuel, God with us. It is Luke who explains events more from Mary's perspective and his comment in chapter 2 verse 19 about her treasuring up these things and pondering them in her heart may indicate that she was the direct source for what he writes.

"He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High"

The angel speaks to Mary of God's favour to her (v28 & 30). The word generally means undeserved favour and is most often translated as grace in the Bible. But Mary's response is very different to that of Zachariah in the same chapter. She has questions but apparently no doubts about what she is being told and willingly accepts the alarming role she is being asked to undertake.

Mary would conceive in her womb (v31) and bear a son. This is something many find difficult to accept yet it can hardly be difficult for the Creator of the universe to do such a thing and



whilst the mainly material stuff of the embryo would come in the ordinary way from Mary, the mainly genetic information would come via the extraordinary creative work of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, Mary is reminded that nothing is impossible with God" (v37).

The other things she is told are similar to what we have seen in other units. The child's name, Jesus, is not explained to her (v31 - it was explained to Joseph in Mtt 1.21) but shows again that He is being sent as **Saviour**. The fact that He is **Christ** is shown in that he will inherit the long empty throne of David reigning over Jacob (Israel) forever (v32-33). The fact that He is **Lord** is shown by the manner of His birth and that He will be called Son of the Most High (v32) and Son of God (v35).

Prayer at the lighting of the fourth candle

God our Father, the angel Gabriel told Mary that she would give birth to a child who would be the Son of God. Though Mary was afraid, she responded to your call with joy. Help us to obey your call today and spread the good news of Jesus. We ask this through Jesus Christ, the light who is coming into the world. Amen.



God spoke to Mary about the amazing child she would bear and how he would be called Son of God.