



The Characters of Christmas

Mary

Luke 1:26-56



Gifts



Gifts

- Gifts tells us about ourselves
 - Carry a message with them



Gifts

- Gifts tells us about ourselves
 - Carry a message with them
- Book
 - How to win friends and influence people
- Book
 - How to lose weight and diet



What was God's Gift?



What was God's Gift?

- The Son of God



What was God's Gift?

- The Son of God
 - We are more sinful than we ever thought
 - The Most High became the most low



What was God's Gift?

- The Son of God
 - We are more sinful than we ever thought
 - The Most High became the most low
 - It takes nothing less than the death of the Son of God to save us



AUTHOR OF THE BESTSELLING THE REASON FOR GOD

TIMOTHY
KELLER



THE SURPRISING TRUTH
BEHIND THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

How much does God love us?

- The incarnation means that for whatever reason God chose to let us fall . . . to suffer, to be subject to sorrows and death—he has nonetheless had the honesty and the courage to take his own medicine. . . . He can exact nothing from man that he has not exacted from himself. He himself has gone through the whole of human experience—from the trivial irritations of family life and the cramping restrictions of hard work and lack of money to the worst horrors of pain and humiliation, defeat, despair, and death. . . . He was born in poverty and . . . suffered infinite pain—all for us—and thought it well worth his while.
- Timothy J. Keller, *Hidden Christmas: The Surprising Truth Behind the Birth of Christ*



Revelation of His Incarnation

Luke 1:26-38

Luke 1:26-27

- “And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth,
- To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.”



Luke 1:19

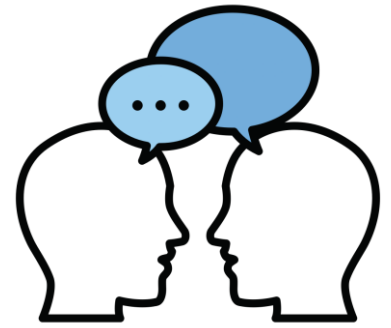
- “And the angel answering said unto him, I am **Gabriel**, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings.”

What do we know about Mary?

- A Jewess of the tribe of Judah
- A descendant of David
- A virgin (mentioned twice here in Luke 1; Isaiah 7:14)
- Espoused (betrothed) to a carpenter named Joseph (Matt. 13:55)



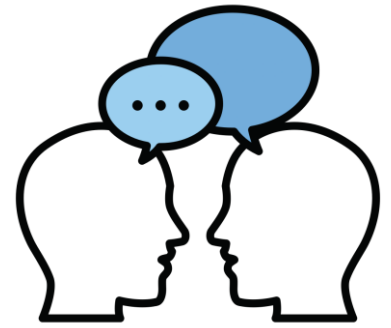
Exchange #1: Luke 1:28-29



“And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.

And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.”

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Message #1

- “Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.”




Hail Mary,
full of grace?

- Hail Mary
 - Greetings Mary





Hail Mary,
full of grace?

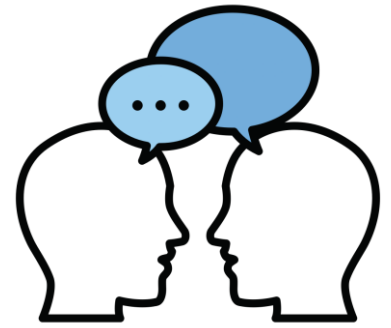
- Hail Mary
 - Greetings Mary
 - Full of grace
 - Not God attracted to you by your greatness
 - Having been graced
 - Mary, you are great because God has come to you
- 

Reaction #1 – Solemnity

- “And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.”
- “Cast in her mind”
 - Reckon
 - Account



Exchange #2: Luke 1:30-34



“And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.

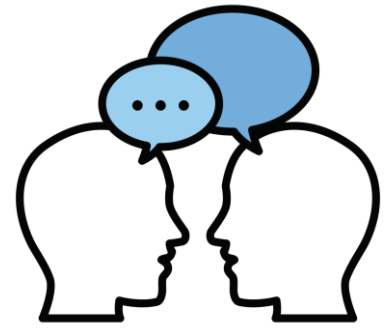
And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus.

He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:

And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?”

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- And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.”

Message #2

- “Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found **favour** with God.
- And, behold, thou shalt **conceive** in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus.
- He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:
- And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.”

Message #2

- Found favour with God
- Conceive a son



Message #2

- “Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.
- And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name **Jesus**.
- He shall be **great**, and shall be called the **Son of the Highest**: and the Lord God shall give unto him the **throne** of his father David:
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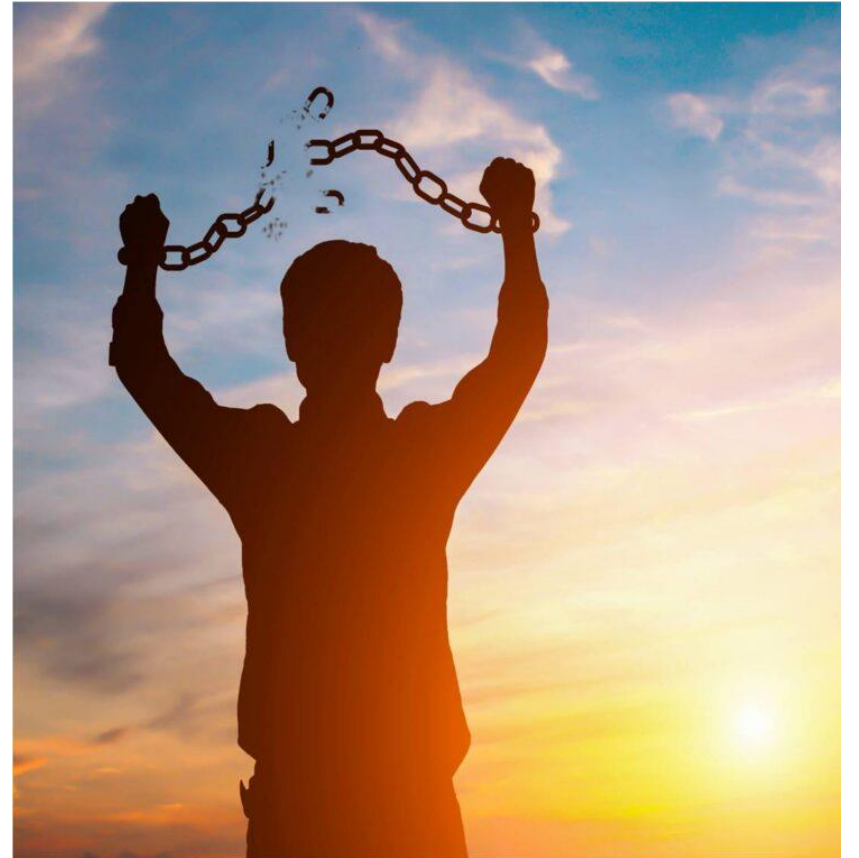
Message #2

1. His Name Will Be Jesus
2. He Will Be Great
3. He Will Be Called Son of the Most High
4. He Will Sit on David's Throne
5. His Kingdom Will Never End



Matthew 1:21

- “And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name **Jesus**: for he shall save his people from their sins.”
- Mary didn’t get the same explanation that was afforded to Joseph
- Jesus - In Hebrew: Joshua, which means Savior or Deliverer



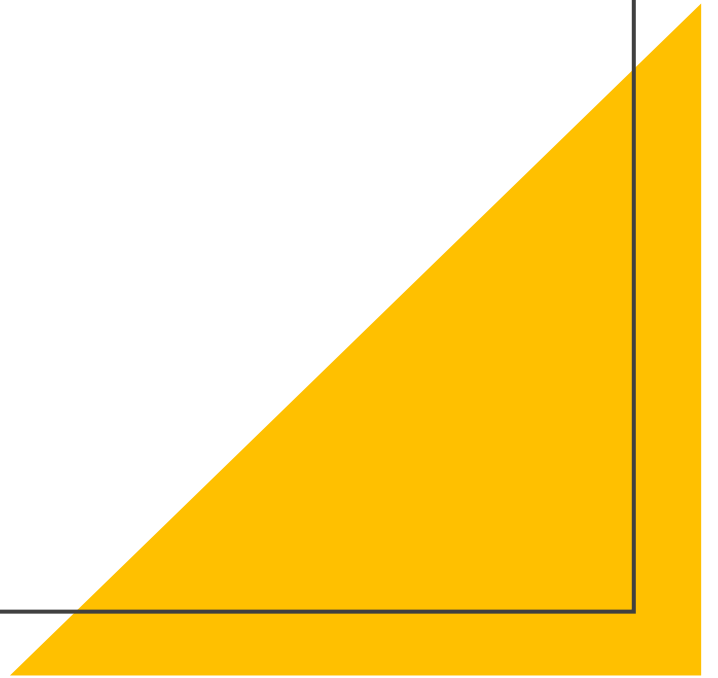
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Colossians 2:9

- “For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.”



Reaction #2

– Sincerity

“How shall this be,
seeing I know not a
man?”



“How shall this
be, seeing I know
not a man?”



- How can this be since I am a virgin?
- She doesn't understand
 - Admits her doubts to Gabriel
- She was wrestling
 - Sincerely
 - Honestly
 - Humbly
- She knew what would happen
- She did not know how it would happen

Matthew 1:18

- “Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, **before they came together**, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.”



Faith or
Faithlessness?

Luke 1:34
vs Luke
1:18

Luke 1:34 - “How shall this be,
seeing I know not a man?”

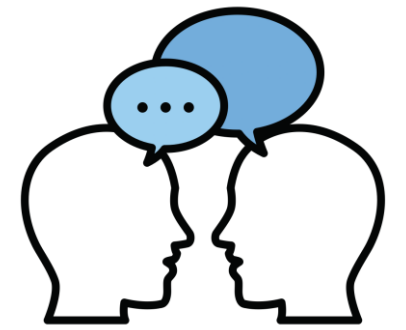
Luke 1:18 - “And Zacharias said
unto the angel, Whereby shall I
know this? for I am an old man,
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Luke 1:34
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1:18

Luke 1:34 - “**How shall this be,**
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Exchange #3: Luke 1:35-38



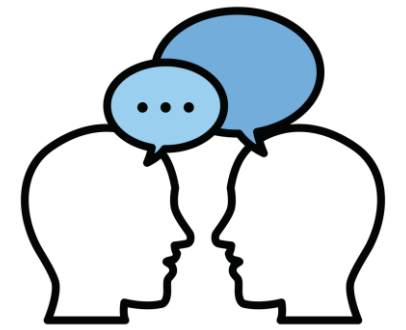
“And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren.

For with God nothing shall be impossible.

And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.”

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- How?



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- How?
- A miracle – The virgin birth
 - She shall conceive of the Holy Spirit



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- How?
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 - The same Holy Spirit that brought life and light out of darkness in Genesis 1 is going to generate life inside Mary's womb
 - God is about to bind Himself to humanity through the conception and the birth of the Messiah



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- Impossible?



“For with God nothing shall be impossible”

- Does not mean that everything is possible?



“For with God nothing shall be impossible”

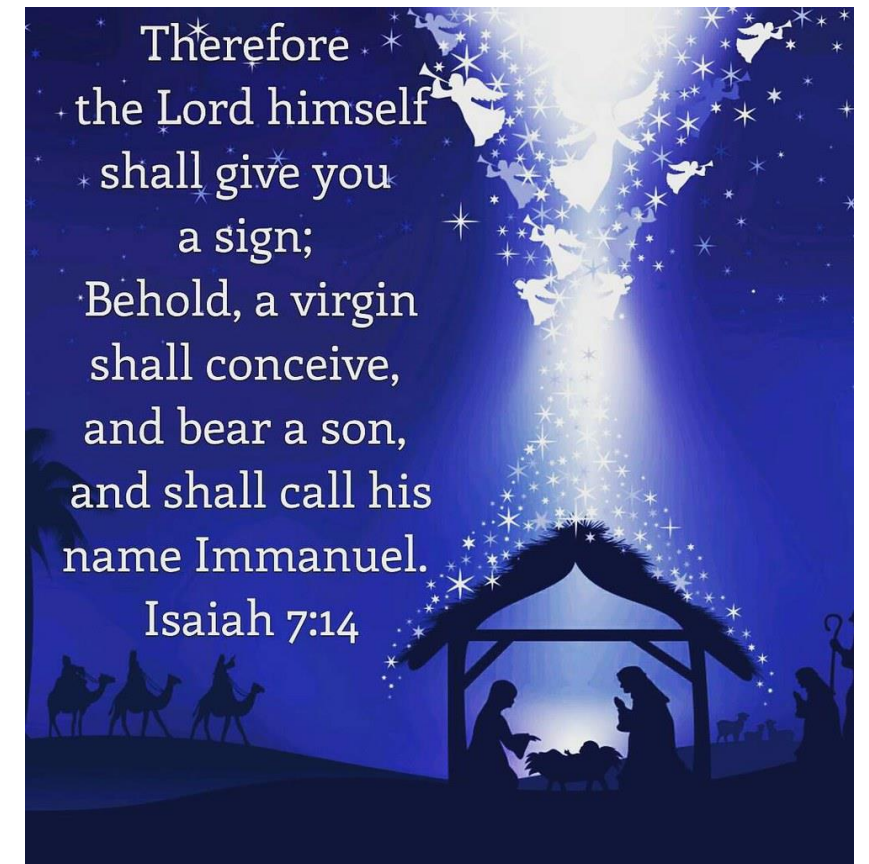
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Luke 1:37

- Does not mean that everything is possible?
- Gabriel talks about Elisabeth who was pregnant in her old age

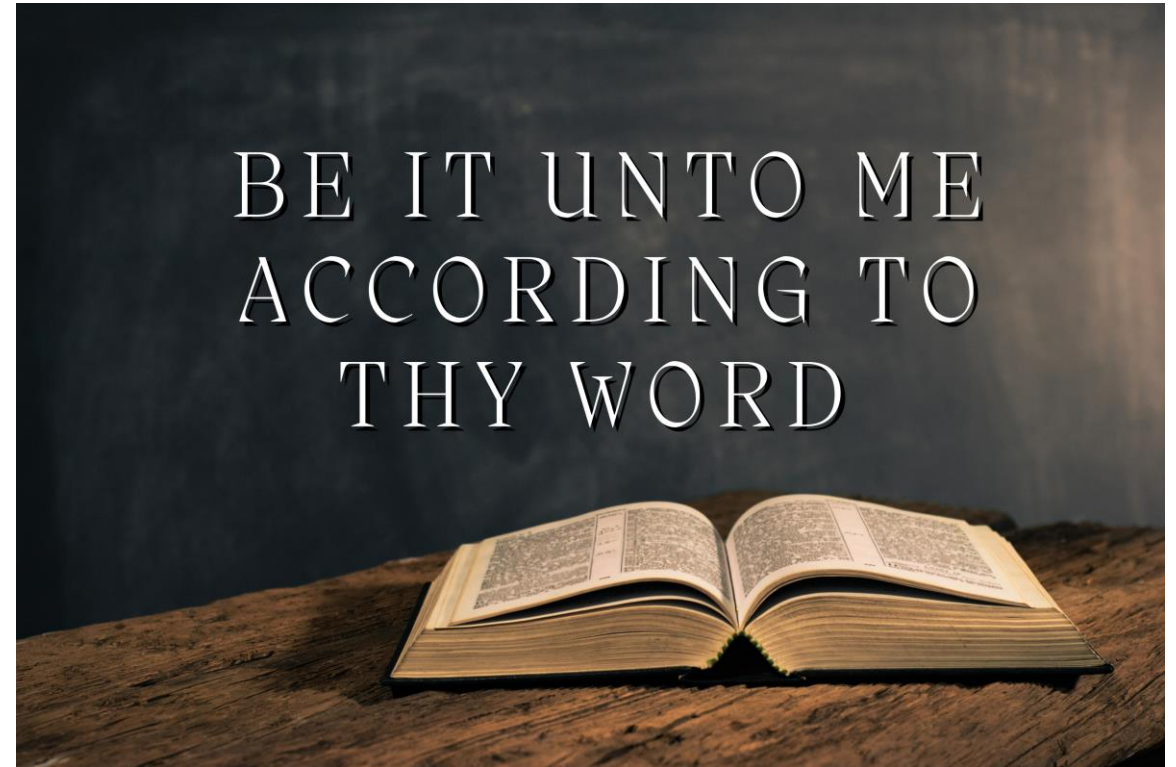
Why the emphasis on a virgin birth?

- The virgin birth is important for two reasons.
 - The fulfillment of the prophecy in Isaiah 7:14
 - "a virgin shall conceive"
 - We need a sinless Saviour so he could take on our sins at the cross



Reaction #3 – Surrender

- “Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word.”



What were the consequences?



Matthew 1:18-20

- “Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.
- Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily.
- But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.”

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- I am the Lord's servant
- If God has His way
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 - Ostracised from family/friends
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 - She didn't know that God in His grace sent an angelic messenger to him
 - Otherwise he would have left her and she would have been an unmarried young single mother, on the lip of poverty all her life



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 - Risked being rejected by society
 - Risked being desperate and homeless



Mary's Faith

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- She experienced the grace of God (Luke 1:30)
- She believed the word of God
- She could be used by the Spirit to accomplish God's will

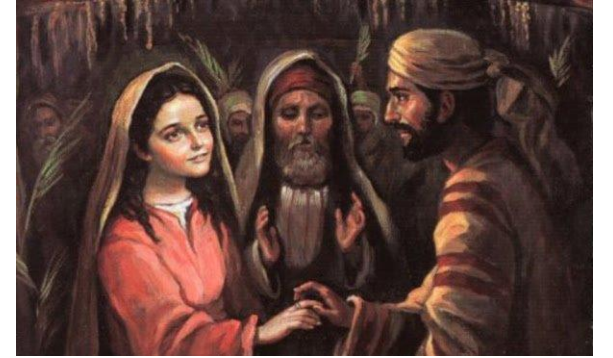
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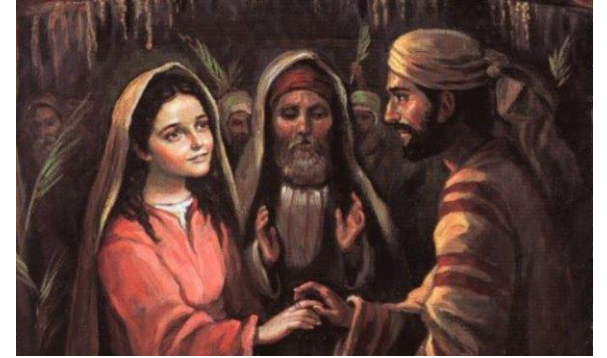
- She belonged totally to the Lord:
 - Body – Luke 1:38
 - Soul – Luke 1:46
 - Spirit – Luke 1:47
- Romans 12:1-2

Betrothal

- Betrothal - not engagement
- Betrothal - the bride and groom commit themselves to establish the beginning of their marriage
- Legally married - but cannot live together yet
- Lived separately until the wedding celebration took place
- Only then - lived together as husband and wife

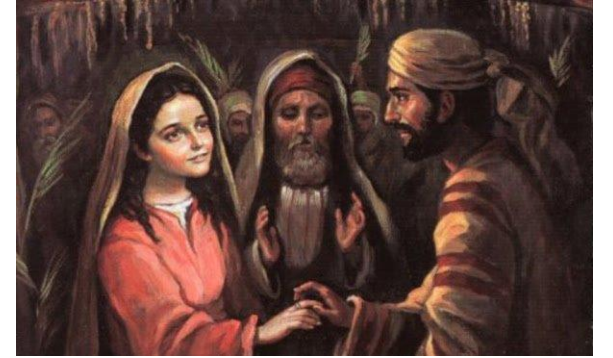


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- Mary's miraculous conception by the Holy Spirit - challenging situation for Joseph
- Without knowing about the Holy Spirit's work, Joseph could only conclude that Mary had been unfaithful

Matthew 1:18-20

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Mary not filled with joy

- The joy comes later
 - Not until she goes to see Elisabeth
- Elisabeth
 - Spirit of God fills her
 - When Elisabeth confirms the word of the angel, Mary bursts into song



Behold I am the handmaid of the Lord

She submits

- She will have a child before she is married
- Her life will be ruined – socially, relationally
- She submits but no joy, no release

Semi comprehending surrender

- Sometimes all we can do
- Sometimes we don't know why it's so hard to do the right thing
- But just submit

Stages of Struggling

- Struggles?
 - Here is how to receive Christ
 - Bring Him into your life
 - And you'll immediately feel wonderful
- Solemnly filled with doubts
- Sincerely bring them to God
- I see the evidence, I see what's going, I give myself, I give up the rights to determine my life and ask for condition
- I give myself unconditionally, and as that happens the experience comes
- How people struggle as Christians
 - There isn't always a blinding light at once
 - There have been struggles, and surrenders in stages
 - Eventually there will be joy

A photograph of two women in traditional Middle Eastern clothing, including headscarves and patterned dresses. The woman on the left is looking down with a gentle smile, while the woman on the right is looking up with her mouth open in a joyful expression. They are standing in a lush green field. The text "Recognition of His Incarnation" is overlaid in the center in a white serif font, and "Luke 1:39-45" is written below it in a smaller white sans-serif font.

Recognition of His Incarnation

Luke 1:39-45

Luke 1:39-40

- “And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Juda;
- And entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth.”



Mary Visits Elisabeth

- Why?
- Remember, at this point
 - Elisabeth is 6 months pregnant
 - There were no phones in those days
- Mary wanted confirmation of what the angel said
 - She witnessed the impossible

The Impossible

- Elisabeth is also pregnant
 - Barren, too old, also touched by God
- Mary was troubled and confused but submitted
 - She goes to see Elisabeth
 - Elisabeth hearing Mary's greeting
 - Filled with the Holy Spirit
 - Gained tremendous perception and power of insight



Luke 1:41-45

- “And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost:
- And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.
- And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?
- For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy.
- And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord.”

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Admiration of Elisabeth

- “Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb”



Admiration of Elisabeth

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Affirmation of Elisabeth

- “And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?”
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Affirmation of Elisabeth

- “And whence is this to me, that **the mother of my Lord** should come to me?”
- For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy.”



The mother of my Lord should come to me

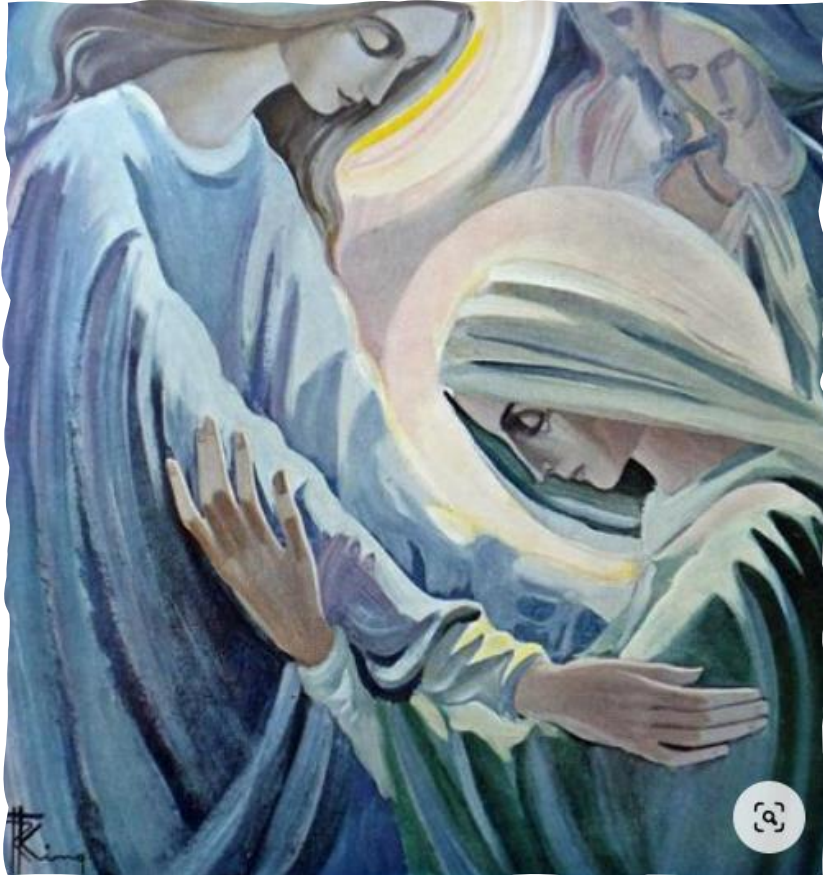
- Mary is struck by what Elisabeth says about her
 - How is it that the mother of my Lord
 - Mary is a nobody socially
 - v. 48 – mindful of the humble state of His servant
 - When Joseph and Mary went to the temple after the Lord Jesus was born, they brought 2 young pigeons – Luke 2 – offering prescribed for the poorest of the poor
- But Elisabeth shows a deference

Luke 2:22, 24

- And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord;
- And to offer a **sacrifice** according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, **A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.**

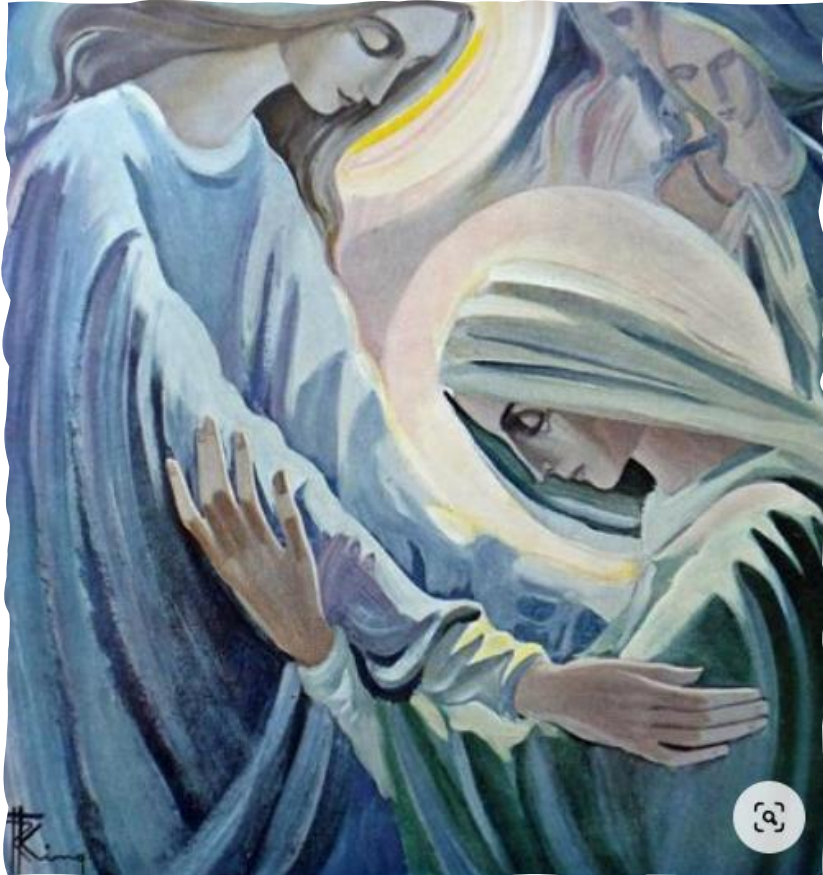


Assurance of Elisabeth



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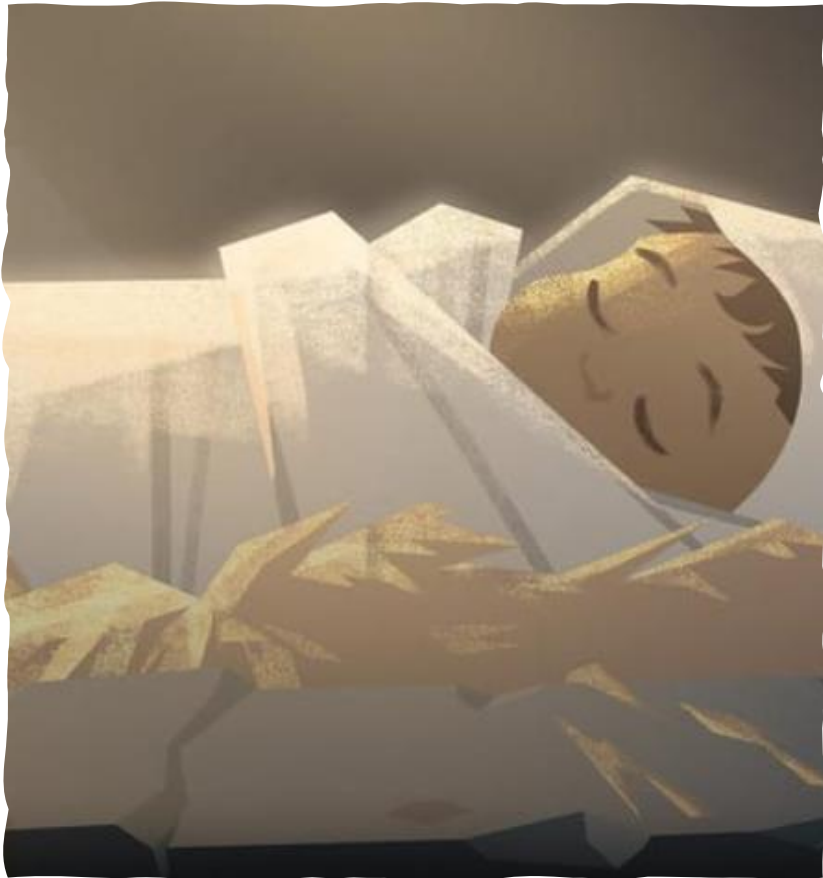
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Mary's Faith



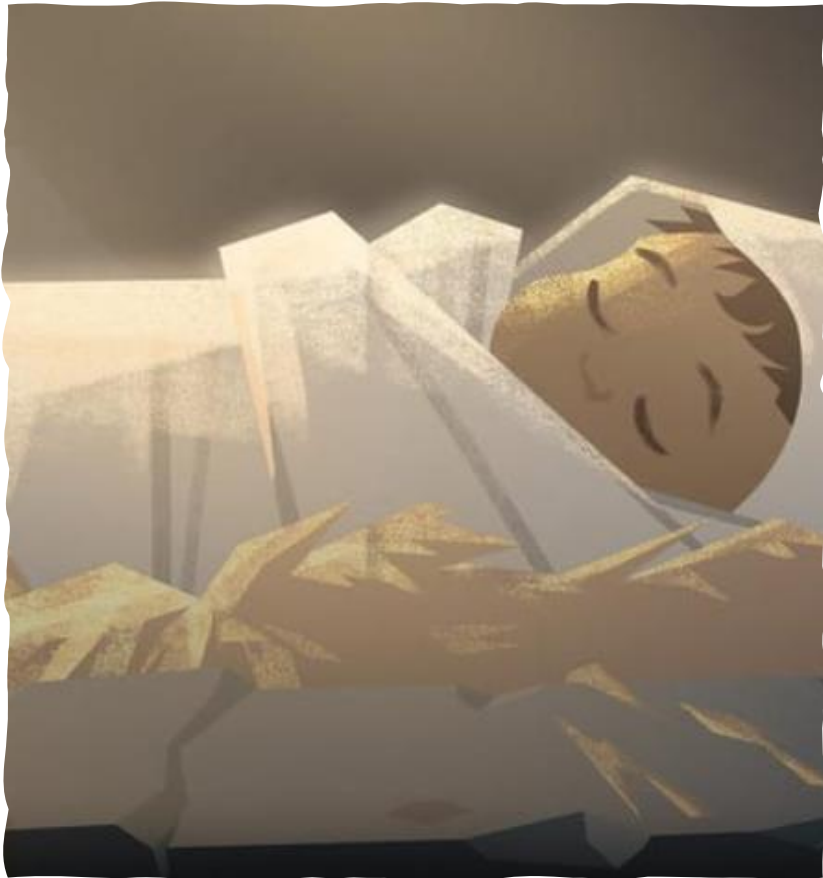
- Elisabeth emphasized Mary's faith:
 - "Blessed is she that believed" – Luke 1:45
- We are saved "by grace... through faith" (Ephesians 2:8)
- Because Mary believed the Word of God, she experienced the power of God

Trinitarian language



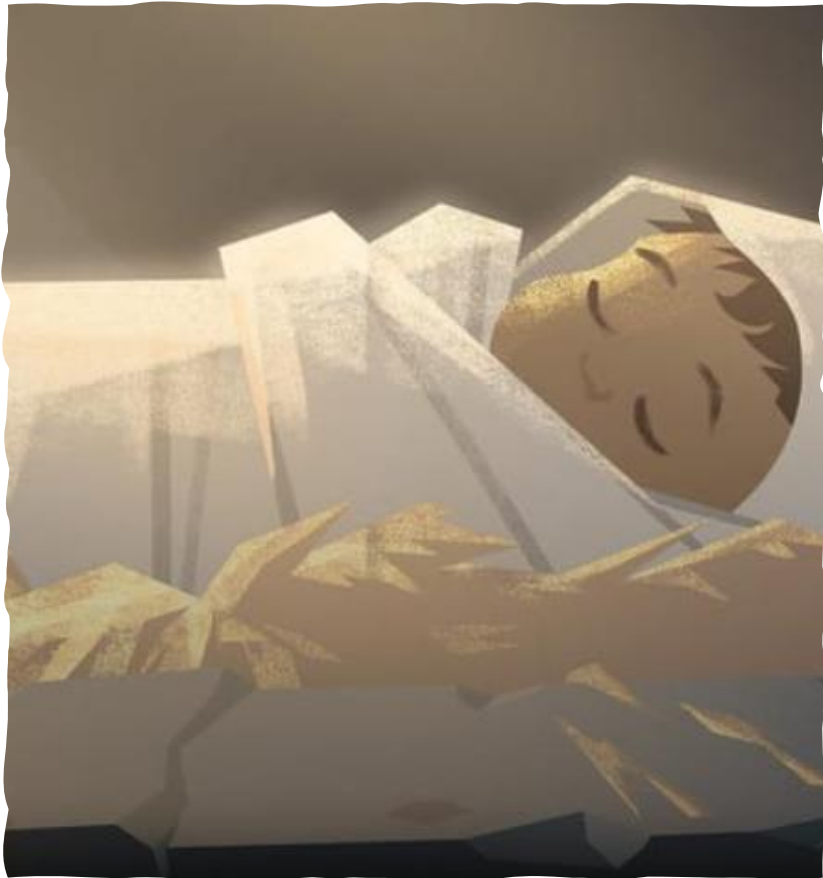
- The Lord has made this promise
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Trinitarian language



- The Lord has made this promise
- The baby in the womb is the Lord
- Where is the Lord?
- Is the Lord the One who sent the baby?
 - Or is the Lord the baby?

Trinitarian language



- The Lord has made this promise
- The baby in the womb is the Lord
- Where is the Lord?
 - Is the Lord the One who sent the baby?
 - Or is the Lord the baby?
- The answer is yes
- The Father is God and the Son is God

Mary's Doubts Dispelled

- Amazing statement by Elisabeth about Mary and the Lord Jesus
 - The fact that Elisabeth knows this confirms that this is from God



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 - What the angel said



Mary's Doubts Dispelled

- Amazing statement by Elisabeth about Mary and the Lord Jesus
 - The fact that Elisabeth knows this confirms that this is from God
- Things Elisabeth is saying pulls together what Mary has been pondering
 - What the angel said
- Then she is able to praise the Lord
 - Not a semi comprehending submission
 - Now she sees and gets it
 - Clarity! Joy!
 - And she begins to sing the first Christmas carol



Response to His Incarnation

Luke 1:46-56




Luke 1:46-56

- “And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord,
- And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.
- For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.
- For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name.
- And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation.
- He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.
- He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree.
- He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away.
- He hath helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy;
- As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever.
- And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned to her own house.”

Luke 1:46-56

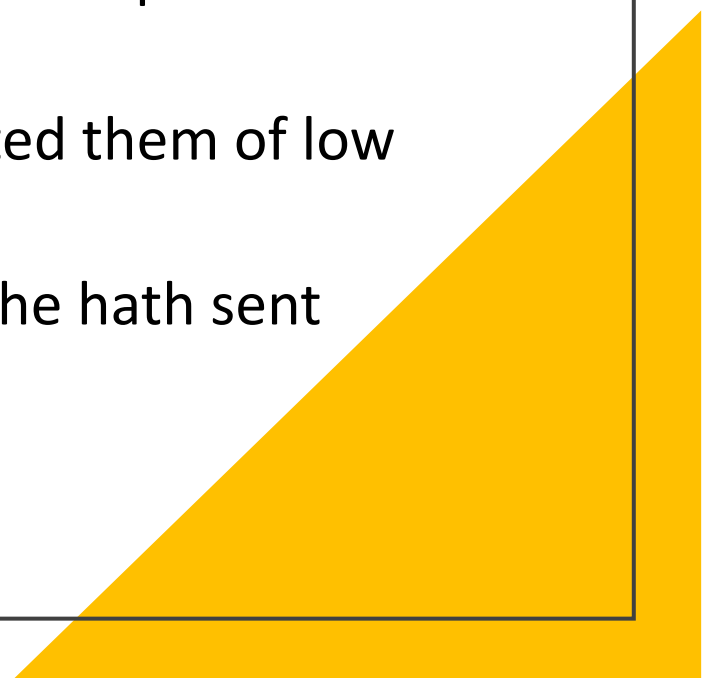
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- And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned to her own house.”

What God did for Mary (Luke 1:46-49)

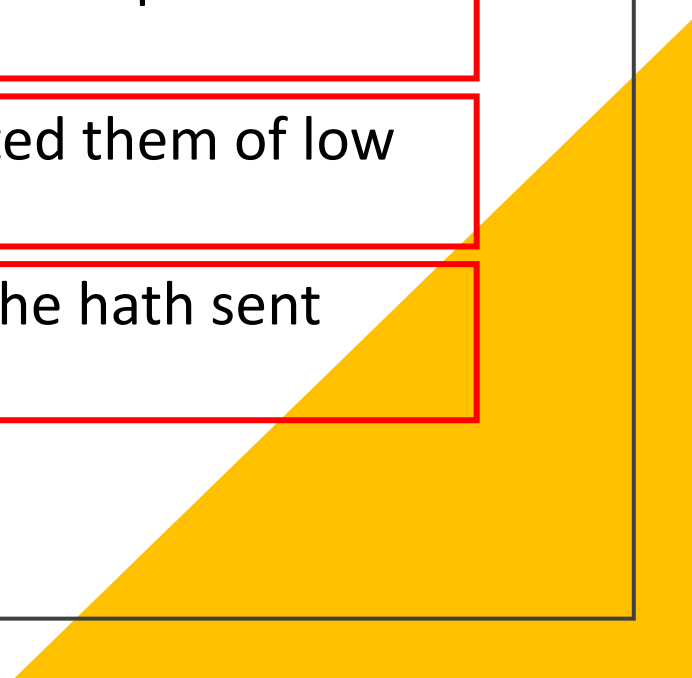
- “And Mary said, My soul doth **magnify** the Lord,
 - And my spirit hath **rejoiced** in **God my Saviour**.
 - For he hath regarded the **low estate** of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.
 - For he that is mighty hath done to me **great things**; and holy is his name.”
- 



What God did for Us (Luke 1:50-53)

- “And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation.
 - He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.
 - He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree.
 - He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away.”
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- 
- A large yellow triangle is positioned in the bottom right corner of the slide, pointing towards the top right.

The Helpless

- Romans 5:6
 - “For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.”



The Humble



Luke 18:9-14



- “And he spake this parable unto certain which **trusted in themselves** that they were **righteous**, and despised others:
- Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a **Pharisee**, and the other a **publican**.
- The **Pharisee** stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am **not as other men** are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.
- I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.
- And the **publican**, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be **merciful** to me a **sinner**.
- I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that **exalteth** himself shall be abased; and he that **humbleth** himself shall be exalted.”

The Hungry

- John 6:35
 - “And Jesus said unto them, I am the **bread** of life: he that cometh to me shall **never hunger**; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.”



God's grace has come to earth



- If we meet with humility, we will have mercy
- Gospel is that we are saved by grace
- Is not that God shows favour to the good and scatters the bad
- It is those who are bad come in, those who think they are good don't
- If you are scattered you will be gathered,
- If you are gathered you will be scattered
- If we say we are all in pieces, He will gather you
- But if we say we are all together, He will scatter you
- If we are humble, He will give us a confidence like He gave to her
- If we are lifted up, He will know us apart



The Gospel and the Poor



- The Gospel of grace will always lift up the poor
- It does not matter your pedigree / uneducated / no connections
- Salvation is by grace – not by being good
- Pulls down the rich
- Not only does the Gospel show the poor that they are no worse
- It shows the middle and upper class that they are no better
- Either we can find that out gently now
 - Drawn down – no different than the poor in God's eyes and it's not mine
- The poor hear the Gospel before the middle class
 - Historical fact
 - Dignifies radically the poor

- 
- A large, solid orange circle is positioned on the left side of the slide, partially cut off by the edge.
- Are we willing to admit we are helpless?
 - Are we humble enough to admit we are sinners?
 - Are we hungry for the bread of life?
- 
- A yellow dashed line is located in the bottom right corner of the slide, consisting of several short, curved segments.



What God did for Israel (Luke 1:54-55)

- “He hath helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy;
- As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever.”



Genesis 17:9

- "And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an **everlasting covenant**, and with his seed after him."

God's Promise

- He helped His servant Israel
 - That promise to Abraham
 - 2000 years old but it happened



God's Promise

- He helped His servant Israel
 - That promise to Abraham
 - 2000 years old but it happened
 - The Lord Jesus promised to come back and make everything right
 - Also 2000 years old



God's Promise

- He helped His servant Israel
 - That promise to Abraham
 - 2000 years old but it happened
 - The Lord Jesus promised to come back and make everything right
 - Also 2000 years old
- Don't doubt it!





Luke 11:27-28

- “And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked.



Luke 11:27-28

- “And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked.
- But he said, Yea rather, **blessed** are they that **hear the word of God**, and **keep it.**”

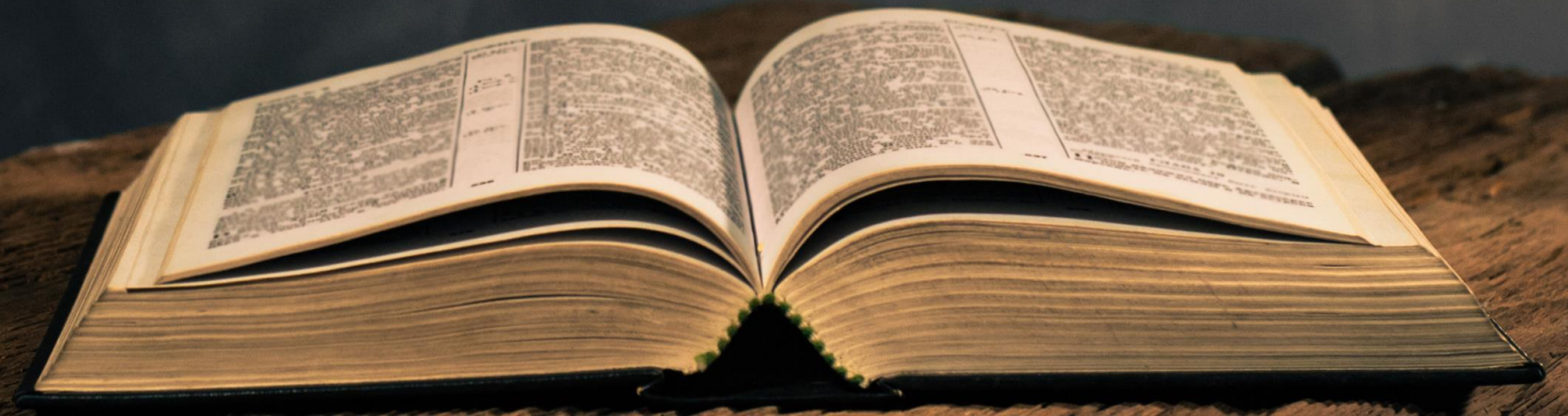
Will you
be like
Mary?

Revelation

Recognition

Response

BE IT UNTO ME
ACCORDING TO
THY WORD



In Christ Alone

In Christ alone, who took on flesh
Fullness of God in helpless babe
This gift of love and righteousness
Scorned by the ones He came to save

'Til on that cross as Jesus died
The wrath of God was satisfied
For every sin on Him was laid
Here in the death of Christ I live, I live



The Characters of Christmas

Mary

Luke 1:26-56