



ADVENT DEVOTIONAL

SCRIPTURE

LUKE 1:26-38

26 In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, 27 to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. 28 And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." 29 But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. 30 The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31 And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him 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 ancestor David. 33 He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." 34 Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" [b] 35 The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born[c] will be holy; he will be called Son of God. 36 And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. 37 For nothing will be impossible with God." 38 Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

DEVOTIONAL

The Rev. Lucinda Isaacs, DMin student

Who knows how many Gabriels there are in our world? God can use whomever God pleases as a messenger. Do sleep disruptions, dreams, or apparent happenstances constitute anything more than an overactive imagination? When Mary is confronted by Gabriel, Luke tells us that she is perplexed. I like to imagine that she was shaken to her core. Mary was trying to make sense of this peculiar moment. Was she worried about projecting her wishes? Did she think that she was making all this up? Faithfulness perplexes us at times, and we are invited to ponder the wonders of God. These moments are difficult to comprehend, especially if we are tempted to jump to answers or look for easy confirmation. What if, instead, we allow ourselves to be shaken to our core? In the shaking, we begin to ponder things we assume are impossible. The shaking is holy. The stirring is sacred. The trembling shakes loose shame and fear. The wonder creates a world larger than the one we fashioned with our doubts and perceived unlovability. Nothing will be impossible with God. Mary shows us that one way to rejoice is to be perplexed. When we are perplexed, do not be afraid. Rejoice in the shaking. Ponder the stirring.

PRAYER

Gracious God, shake us now. Perplex us. Help us not always seek answers when we encounter your mystery, but shake loose in us everything that makes your grace feel impossible. This way we can ponder the world you'd have us create. Amen.

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