

An Angel Visits Mary

(Luke 1:26-38; Matthew 1:18-25)

Introduction

What do you know about angels? (Where do they live? What do they look like? Do they have halos? Do they have wings? Are they boys or girls? What is their job (see Heb 1:14)?) Have you seen an angel? (See Heb 13:2) What angels have you learned about?

Do you know what an announcement is? Has anyone ever made an announcement to you? Last week we learned that the angel Gabriel visited Zechariah to tell him that although he and his wife, Elizabeth, were very old, God was going to answer their prayers and give them a baby. God sent Gabriel to make this amazing birth announcement!

Today we're going to learn about what happened when the angel Gabriel visited Mary.

Opening Prayer

Father, we're so thankful to have the Bible. Thank You we live in a country where we can freely come together to read and study it and learn of You. This morning I pray You would speak to each of our hearts in a fresh new way. Give us good listening ears so that we might hear You speaking into our hearts. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Memory Verse

Mary responded, "I am the Lord's servant. May everything you have said about me come true." (Luke 1:38)

Lesson

Last week we learned about the birth announcement for John the Baptist. Today, we pick up the story when Elizabeth is about 6 months along...

At this time, Mary and Joseph were engaged to be married. And, suddenly an angel came to Mary telling her that God would do a miracle in her, like he did for her cousin, Elizabeth!

Luke 1:26-29

In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a village in Galilee, (27) to a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of King David. (28) Gabriel appeared to her and said, "Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you!" (29) Confused and disturbed, Mary tried to think what the angel could mean.

[Teacher, show where Nazareth is on the map.]

You can imagine how startling it would be to suddenly have a visit from the angel Gabriel! Mary and Joseph weren't married yet. Mary was still living at home with her parents. People think that Mary was about 14 or 15 years old. She was probably excited about her upcoming marriage to Joseph. She probably wondered what kind of a life she'd have as the wife of a carpenter. She probably thought she'd have a quiet and peaceful life. Then, suddenly an angel shows up! It must have frightened her!

Luke 1:30-33

"Don't be afraid, Mary," the angel told her, "for you have found favor with God! (31) You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. (32) He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David. (33) And he will reign over Israel forever; his Kingdom will never end!"

How do you think Mary might have reacted to this news? (Excited; happy to be chosen; curious about how it would happen; scared. Mary is confused about why God has chosen her and what the angel's message might mean. Mary might have felt too young or unimportant for such a special task.)

Mary knew where babies come from. She knew life is produced only when a man and a woman come together. Since she had kept herself pure for her future husband, she wondered how she could possibly get pregnant.

Luke 1:34

Mary asked the angel, "But how can this happen? I am a virgin."

Mary wasn't doubting God's ability to perform a miracle, she just wondered how He was going to do this.

Here's what the angel Gabriel said...

Luke 1:35-37

The angel replied, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the baby to be born will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God. What's more, your relative Elizabeth has become pregnant in her old age! People used to say she was barren, but she has conceived a son and is now in her sixth month. For the word of God will never fail."

Can you think of anything too hard for God to do? He created the whole world! He said, "Let there be light," and there was light. Making Mary pregnant was a synch for Him!

Mary's response is so beautiful... It's our verse for this week.

Luke 1:38

Mary responded, "I am the Lord's servant. May everything you have said about me come true." And then the angel left her.

From what we have just read about Mary, what do we know about her? She was favored by God (vs 28, 30). She was a virgin (vs 34), she kept herself pure. She is humble; she viewed herself as the Lord's servant (vr 38). She was eager to please God in everything she did (vs 38).

We should follow Mary's example of eagerly wanting to follow God's plan for our lives!

We've learned about Mary; now turn to the Gospel of Matthew, the first book in the New Testament and we'll learn about Joseph.

Matthew 1:18

This is how Jesus the Messiah was born. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. But before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Mary got pregnant, but NOT by Joseph. They had never been together. What do you think was going on in Joseph's heart when he heard that his fiancé was pregnant? How would you have felt? Joseph had every right to have Mary stoned to death in the public square.

But, an angel appeared to Joseph in a dream and told him that the child Mary was carrying is the Savior that his people, the Jews, had been waiting for since the beginning of time.

Matthew 1:19-23

Joseph, to whom she was engaged, was a righteous man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he decided to break the engagement quietly. (20) As he considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. "Joseph, son of David," the angel said, "do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit. (21) And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." (22) All of this occurred to fulfill the Lord's message through his prophet: (23) "Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel, which means 'God is with us.'"

No other child had ever been or would ever be born like this. Our loving God was coming into the world miraculously, born as a baby. He would be God in a human body. And, because He would be both perfect God and perfect man, He alone could pay the price for all the sin of the world. Jesus, who would never sin, would die on a cross and take the punishment for our sins: yours and mine.

God is holy and he cannot have anything sinful in heaven with him. He hates our sin and says that all sin must be punished. The Bible tells us that the punishment for any sin is death. That means being separated from God forever. We deserve to be punished for all the wrong things we think, say, and do. But God loves us so much that He came from heaven to take our punishment.

Joseph obeyed the angel and took Mary as his wife.

Matthew 1:24

When Joseph woke up, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded and took Mary as his wife.

From what we have read about Joseph, what kind of man was he? (He was a righteous man. He was kind; he didn't want to disgrace Mary publicly. And, he trusted God. After receiving the message from the angel, Joseph immediately obeyed God and took Mary as his wife.)

Sometimes it is hard to obey God, but He will help you and give you His strength to say, "No" to wrong and "Yes" to His way.

Aren't you glad Joseph didn't have Mary put to death? What do you think would have happened if Mary and Joseph hadn't obeyed the angel? (Jesus wouldn't have been born and couldn't have gone to the cross for us.)

If Jesus had never been born, what would be different in our lives? (No Christmas, our calendar years would be numbered differently, no hope of heaven, no churches, no forgiveness of sin.)

It's very important that we be willing to do what God wants us to do. Let's pray and ask the Lord to help us to be willing servants. And let's thank him for sending us His Son to save us from our sins....

Closing Prayer

Lord, thank You for coming to earth and being born as a man. That means that You know full well what it's like for us to be humans here on earth. And thank You for dying on the cross and taking the punishment for my sins. I look forward to being with you in heaven one of these days. And thank You for giving us your Word, the holy Bible that tells us about your wonderful plan for our lives. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Write "Thank You" notes to God for sending Jesus to take the punishment of our sins.

Game Center

Or, use the following review questions in a game of your choice:

1. What are some of the Old Testament prophecies concerning the coming of Jesus? (He would be born of a virgin, born in Bethlehem, a descendant of David.)
2. What was it about the announcement of Jesus' birth that shows us that He would be more than an ordinary man? (His birth was announced by an angel, He would be born of a virgin, and called, "Son of the Most High.")
3. From what we read about Mary, what kind of a person was she? (She's honest; she kept herself pure; she was eager to please God in everything she did.)

4. How did Mary feel when she first heard the angel's news about the Savior? (Confused; then joyful.)
5. What kind of person was Joseph? (Matthew 1:19 says he was a just man. He immediately obeyed God.)
6. How do you think Joseph felt when he first found out Mary was having a baby? (Confused, sad, angry, disappointed)
7. What changed Joseph's mind? (A visit from an angel in a dream.)
8. How did Joseph know that Mary's baby would be special? (The angel explained that the child was sent from God, and the baby was to be named "Jesus", a name that means "Savior.")
9. How do you think Joseph felt when he realized he would be helping Mary take care of God's Son? (Happy, proud, anxious to do God's will.)
10. Why did God come to earth in the form of a baby? Why did God have to become a man? (He came specifically to take the punishment for our sins.)
11. Why is it important to understand that Jesus is God? (He was sinless and had all power.)
12. Why does sin have to be punished? (God is perfect and He cannot tolerate any impurity in His presence. Since He wants us to spend eternity with Him in heaven, He knew He had to do something about our sin problem.)
13. What prophecies concerning Jesus have not been fulfilled yet? (He's coming back!)
14. If Jesus had never been born, what would be different in our lives? (No Christmas, our calendar years would be numbered differently, no hope of heaven, no churches, no forgiveness of sin.)

Questions for younger children:

1. Who came to see Mary? (Angel Gabriel)
2. How did Mary react when the angel suddenly appeared to her? (She was confused and disturbed)
3. What did the angel tell Mary? (You will have a son.)
4. What did the angel tell Mary to name her son? (Jesus)
5. What does Jesus mean? (Savior)
6. Mary asks how this will happen since she isn't married. What does the angel tell her? (The Holy Spirit will come on you.)
7. Did Mary agree to have this baby? (Yes. She said, "I am the Lord's servant. May everything you have said about me come true.")
8. How did Joseph take the news that Mary was going to have a baby? (He was sad. So, he was going to divorce her quietly.)
9. Then the angel visited Joseph. What did the angel tell him? (That it was OK to marry Mary, because the baby was from the Holy Spirit.)
10. Did Joseph obey the angel? (Yes, he took Mary home to be his wife.)
11. What do you think would have happened if Mary and Joseph hadn't obeyed the angel? (Jesus wouldn't have been born.)

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