

Preaching notes for Peace - Luke 1:26-38

In the short time that the angel visits with Mary her world is turned completely upside down, From an ordinary girl looking forward to her marriage to Joseph to bearing a son who will be the Son of God and reign over Israel with a kingdom that will never end, (verses 32, 33). The angel Gabriel' greeting to Mary is very different to that of Zechariah, as we ourselves would speak differently to a young girl in comparison to a mature and experienced priest. Notice their reactions to the news that they (Zechariah and Mary) have been chosen to play their part in God's spectacular redemption plan. They both have questions: Zechariah "how can I be sure of this....?" and Mary: "how will this be...?" but notice that Zechariah's question is one of trust and lack of belief (even though he is in the temple performing a religious ritual) therefore has a different outcome (verse 20) to Mary's. "These are stupendous claims" (Wilcock) that are made for this unborn baby (verses 32,33) and if you use a Bible with verse cross references you will see the very many Old Testament sections that this refers to.

When reading this passage in particular and the whole of Luke chapter 1 in general do you feel the sense of excitement and anticipation jumping out of the pages at you? Perhaps also, in addition to the excitement, a sense of awe that this is God's plan for the salvation of mankind which has been slowly unfolding over hundreds of years and is now taking place and trust in knowing that we are called to participate.

The miraculous birth of a child to a virgin is an integral part of this account, to try and explain it humanly, biologically or in a way that revises the translation undermines the authority and the magnitude of the event. God, who brought the world and the universe into being, is certainly able to have a woman conceive without the natural process -isn't that the point of miracles (the supernatural)?

To conclude, we who are living through anxious times, separated from loved ones and perhaps fearful for the future can be comforted by the peace that we feel coming from Mary (verse 38). The rejection and ridicule that she will face from her family, the hard times ahead with Joseph, yet God is with her now and forever. **Amen**

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