

Mary's honor and her commitment to Adonai (God) is about to be tested.

*In the sixth month, the angel Gavri'el (Gabriel) was sent by God to a city in the Galil (Galilee) called Natzeret (Nazareth), to a virgin engaged to a man named Yosef (Joseph), of the house of David; the virgin's name was Miryam (Mary). Approaching her, the angel said, "Shalom, favored lady! Adonai is with you!" She was deeply troubled by his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Don't be afraid, Miryam, for you have found favor with God. Look! You will become pregnant, you will give birth to a son, and you are to name him Yeshua (Jesus). He will be great; he will be called Son of Ha'Elyon (the Most High). Adonai, God, will give him the throne of his forefather David; and he will rule the House of Ya'akov (Jacob) forever – there will be no end to his Kingdom." "How can this be," asked Miryam of the angel, "since I am a virgin?" Luke 1:26-34 (CJB)*

Have you ever had something happen that caused your whole life, flash before your eyes? That is probably what happened to Mary when the angel told her she was going to have a child.

Judging from the fact that no one else is mentioned, Mary must have been alone; and no doubt in her safe place – the home. Also we can assume that Gabriel is at least appearing as a man. This "man" has invaded Mary's safe place and if that is not alarming enough, a visit from an angel is no trivial matter. I am not sure that his greeting "Don't be afraid" was much comfort at this point. Her honor is at stake here. Shame and Honor are the currency of this culture.

I'm sure that hundreds of thoughts were racing through Mary's mind at that moment. Mary was betrothed; they were in the process of setting up their home. They had not yet consummated their marriage but were considered married in that culture. What was Joseph going to do? What would her father do? Would she be accused of adultery, which could carry the death penalty? How will her community react to her being pregnant too soon? Would Joseph divorce her and if so would she ever be able to have a husband? How would she support herself and the child? The unimaginable probabilities were mounting.

Yet despite all of these possibilities and most unusual circumstances, Mary keeps her cool and only asks, "How can this be"? She must have been a spiritually strong woman because she believed that the angel was from God and her questioning the angel went much better than

Zachariah's when an angel confronted him (a few verses earlier) and he asked why, in disbelief. [See Luke 1:11-20]

*The angel answered her: "The Ruach HaKodesh (Holy Spirit) will come over you, the power of Ha'Elyon will cover you. Therefore the holy child born to you will be called the Son of God.*

<sup>36</sup> *"You have a relative, Elisheva (Elizabeth), who is an old woman; and everyone says she is barren. But she has conceived a son and is six months pregnant! For with God, nothing is impossible."*

*Miryam said, "I am the servant of Adonai; may it happen to me as you have said." Then the angel left her. Luke 1:35-38 (CJB)*

In spite of all the things that could happen to her she is willing to live and trust in God. Her confidence must have been so strong that none of the negative probabilities for her future were of consequence to her.

*Without delay, Miryam set out and hurried to the town in the hill country of Y'hudah (Judah) where Z'kharyah lived, entered his house and greeted Elisheva. Luke 1:39-40 (CJB)*

In spite of what we see in the movies, Mary would not have travelled alone. It was not safe for anyone to travel alone in that country. She most likely traveled with a trusted family, because she would need to protect her honor and possibly her life. A woman traveling without a family male protector or a group of other women would be suspected of planning some kind of illicit behavior.

*When Elisheva heard Miryam's greeting, the baby in her womb stirred. Elisheva was filled with the Ruach HaKodesh and spoke up in a loud voice, "How blessed are you among women! And how blessed is the child in your womb! Luke 1:41-42 (CJB)*

Mary has gone from being a little girl, just barely into adulthood, in a nowhere town in Galilee called Nazareth; to the Mother of the Savior of all mankind. But her tests and trials have just begun.

**How will Joseph take the news when she returns?**

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