

THE JOURNEY BEFORE THE JOURNEY

MARY'S STORY

What the angel was about to tell her, and what she was about to experience, no doubt seemed like more than she could possibly bear, but God would be with her every step of the way. Ref: Luke 1:30

The word Immanuel means *God with us*.

How would Mary respond? The truth is: this is a question she had answered long before Gabriel's visit. Her response to him merely reflected the person she had already decided she would be. Ref: Luke 1:38

This journey was made possible by the power of the simple phrase: *I am the Lord's servant*.

ELIZABETH AND ZECHARIAH'S STORY

Elizabeth was Mary's distant cousin or distant aunt who lived in the hill country near Jerusalem. Her husband, Zechariah, was from the tribe of Aaron, which meant he was a priest.

Zechariah and Elizabeth were both good, godly people — righteous in God's eyes.

When the angel told Mary that she would be with child, she asked: How can this be, since I am a virgin? She didn't *doubt* the angel, she just didn't understand how it could happen. Zechariah, on the other hand, was skeptical. He asked ... "How can I be sure of this?" (Luke 1:18)

Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. (Luke 1:42 KJV)...which is a King James way of saying: "You're pregnant and I'm happy for you because God has chosen you for something special."

Everyone needs an Elizabeth, and everyone needs to look for the opportunity to *be* an Elizabeth.

She was saying: God is no elitist; he loves even the poor and simple people like me. Ref: Mary's song. Luke 1:47-55

JOSEPH'S STORY

Joseph knew what this would mean, if he were to go through with the marriage. He knew what those around him would assume. Ref: Matthew 1:20,21

That didn't matter to Joseph. He was, in Matthew's words, a righteous man. He was a man of faith and courage. And he was good for the task.

CLOSING MOMENTS

In this story you'll notice how each character took their own spiritual journey to a place of surrender to God's will.

Before they could begin the journey to fulfill God's call on their lives, they needed to journey first to a place of surrender. It was like the journey before the journey.

Three thoughts.

1. You're more qualified than you think you are.

Maybe your attitude is "Who am I that God would choose me?" If so, you're right where you need to be.

God has his eye on you. He has plans for you. Ref: 1st Samuel 1`6:7

2. God will give you the confirmation and direction you need, when you need it.

God's hand will lovingly lead you to the place of surrender

3. The Journey Before the Journey Begins Today.

There's a journey of great distance that God will call you take in your life.