



Sermon Notes from 9 December

Advent and the Virgin Who Would Not Laugh (*Luke 1:26-38*)

by Johanan Justin

The Advent, as traditionally observed, is a season prior to Christmas, for us to take time to remember and ponder over - re-enact vividly in our minds and hearts, the birth of Christ as shown in the scriptures.

The Unusual Story of Mary

I. Mary's Introduction (vv26-28)

#1. **Mary is a nobody** (vv26-27) More is said about Joseph than Mary.

#2. **This isn't a story about Mary**

No circumstances of hers or even her name mattered. But Mary suddenly becomes a Somebody (v28). God had chosen her for the extraordinary.

II. Mary's Fear (vv29-33)

Vv29,12 As compared to Zechariah, Mary found the angel's words more fearsome than his gloriously radiant appearance.

v30a The angel knew her name!

v31-33 Mary receives the overwhelming unfolding story of God himself!

Gen 17:15-19,18:9-15 Mary did not respond to the news with cynicism and unbelief. She took the angel's words seriously and responded with hope.

III. Mary's Hope (vv34-37)

v34 No skepticism but a need for clarity. v35a,35 The event was to be supernatural for mankind throughout history to recognise Jesus as holy - set apart and untouched by man's sin, and death, and be known as the Son of God.

Gen 18:14 To this question, God now answers through the angel (Lu 1:36-37).

IV. Mary's Faith (vv38-40)

v38 The 14-year old Mary's faith is seen in her submission to the authority of the word spoken to her and to the God who spoke it.

vv39-40,45 Mary believed what she heard. **Good news is so so good precisely because it is so so true.** Mary learns that she too is pregnant (v42).

3 Questions for Reflection and 1 Challenge for this Advent Season

1. Are you grateful to have received the good news of Jesus' birth?

Today we receive God's word as it is in the Bible.

Rom 3:22b-23 As enemies of God, we were worse than Nobodies! *Is your name - your history of accomplishments - so precious to you that you would rather keep your name, and reject the good news that God has favoured you and is with you even though you are a sinner?* Resist pride! Let gratitude well up in you for Jesus has come, making Somebodies out of Nobodies like us.

2. Are you filled with the laughter of cynicism?

Mary did not laugh. Jesus -this one Man- single-handedly rocked the course of human history and is even today still radically making us into Somebodies. *Are you rejecting the reality of this Man because one or two areas of His coming to earth seems ridiculous to you?*

3. How deep is your joy? Enter into the upside-down world where a virgin gave birth, where God became a human baby, and where the most selfless servants find the deepest joy.

4. Make this Christmas about Jesus

2 Cor 8:9; Rev 21:4 With dead seriousness, submit yourselves to be part of His story, and come to share with Mary in the deep, strong, rolling, unobstructed laughter that only He can give.