

ADVENT: WEEK TWO

day 11

Mary's Journey

- Luke 1:39–45



Upon having an angelic visitation and hearing an unbelievable word from the Lord, Mary responds in a remarkable way. Instead of sitting to ponder what her life will look like now or to see if all of this is really true (as we know, it could take some time to see confirmation), she decides to seek out confirmation of the other miracle the angel told her about: the news that her cousin who had been barren and was now quite old was in fact with child. Based on what we know, Mary probably had a journey of 64 miles to make. And this journey is probably a great time for her to start thinking about all that her YES to God will require. She will face death over her choice. She has no right to be pregnant and will be at the mercy of Joseph. They are betrothed, which basically means they are married in the eyes of the law but have not yet started living together as man and wife; he would have already referred to her as his wife at this point. He can choose to divorce her quietly, which leaves her alive but in disgrace, or to have her killed for her adultery...or could he possibly choose the third option and believe what she tells him? She has no way of knowing. This was not a man she fell in love with but a man her parents picked out for her or a man who possibly recognized something in her and sought her out; either way, she probably knows him by reputation only. If she lives, she will be the butt of every joke in that small town, the scandal that people talk about every time she passes by. She will bring shame upon her household, all while clinging to the impossible story that an angel told her she was carrying the Son of God, the Messiah they had all been waiting for. Yet upon her arrival at Elizabeth's home, Mary is immediately greeted with the joyful realization that the barren one is now with child. *Not only does she get confirmation that miracles are happening, but Elizabeth is also full of the Holy Spirit upon this encounter and begins to bless Mary. How kind of the Spirit to fill Elizabeth's mouth with prophecy directed at Mary herself-that she is blessed, that her very voice brings joy and life to those around her!*

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And we also learn that she is blessed because she believed that there would be a fulfillment. Earlier in this story, we see Elizabeth's own husband Zechariah faced with a similar visitation from Gabriel. But instead of immediately believing and receiving Gabriel's word that Elizabeth shall bear a son, he wants some kind of evidence or proof, and God's proof is for Zechariah to be mute throughout the pregnancy. So Mary's yes stands out in sharp contrast. *The blessing comes from the belief, and this belief cannot be faked because it is revealed to Elizabeth by the Holy Spirit, who alone could have searched Mary's heart for the truth.* Like Mary, may we seek confirmation of miracles from those around us. This only happens when we are willing to share life with others and put forth effort to be in their lives. Mary quickly put herself in an environment that would feed her faith, rather than staying in one that would only feed her doubts. May we surround ourselves with other faith-filled people who carry the presence of God so that we can see Him at work in them and receive access to the truth He offers us through them!

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