

The Promise Fulfilled

Luke 1:26–38 (NRSVue)



ADVENT BEGINS—A SEASON OF HOPE.

We wait. We watch. We prepare.

Not only for Bethlehem, but for Jesus' return.

Advent is dawn breaking after a long night—filled with expectation, faith, and God's promise fulfilled.

Luke takes us to the moment God made a promise to Mary through an angel's announcement. We see God's faithfulness, the faith of Mary, and the joy that flows into the world because the Child is to be born.

God's Faithfulness

The angel Gabriel speaks words that echo across centuries: "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end" (Luke 1:30–33).

This isn't a sudden promise, but the completion of one spoken long ago. God promised King David that his throne will be established forever. The prophets foretold a Messiah who brings peace and justice. Now, in the sleepy town of Nazareth, God's faithfulness is shown not in a palace or on a battlefield, but in the womb of a young woman. A fulfillment of promises beyond our imagination.

Advent reminds us that God never forgets his promises. They linger like incense, rising and bringing his presence to mind.

In a quiet moment at home, Mary heard Gabriel speak words that still comfort us today: *Do not be afraid*.

Fears are silenced because God's promises are sure. *Do not be afraid*—these words aren't wishful thinking or

hollow comfort. They're a command rooted in reality: God is faithful, and what he promises, he does.

His kingdom comes forever. Jesus will return.

Mary's Faith

Mary's response isn't blind acceptance. She asks an honest question: "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" (Luke 1:34). She doesn't hide her confusion. She voices her doubt. And yet, the angel assures her: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you... For nothing will be impossible with God" (Luke 1:35–37).

Mary then utters words that have shaped our faith for twenty centuries: "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word" (Luke 1:38). She puts her life in God's hands, like clay to be shaped by a potter's careful touch.

Mary's faith is active and bold, though it begins in doubt. She walks into the unknown with confidence, relying on God's strength to make possible what's beyond her reach. Her doubt evolves into trust and offers us a powerful example, not only in Advent but throughout life. We too are invited to lean on God's promises, even when the odds are uncertain and the world's unsettled.

Faith isn't questions unasked. It's a willingness to say, "Here am I," even when the path ahead twists and turns. Mary's faith teaches us how obedience and trust open the way for God's promises to be fulfilled in us and through us.

Joy to the World!

The promise given to Mary wasn't for her alone, nor only for Israel, but for the whole world. Isaiah's words still ring out: "For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders, and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6).

The promise given to Mary wasn't for her alone, nor only for Israel, but for the whole world. Her joy—rich, lasting—should be shared. Joy to the world!

JOY RINGS LIKE A BELL ACROSS THE WORLD, clear and unbroken. Rooted in hope, sustained by faith, fulfilled in love—Christ has come, and Christ will come again.

So rejoice! Bethlehem is behind us, Christ's return is before us, God's promise is fulfilled, his kingdom is without end.

And you and I live in that kingdom. Joy is for ever!

Amen

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