

Merry Christmas!



Ray Bentley

This Day

June 21, 1957—January 4, 2022
FOREVER IN OUR HEARTS

HOW WILL THIS BE?

"GREETINGS, YOU WHO ARE HIGHLY FAVORED! THE LORD IS WITH YOU."
—LUKE 1:28, NIV

A young woman, engaged to be married, was going about her daily business when an angel visited her.

Not just any angel.

It was Gabriel, who appeared to the ancient prophet Daniel to explain his visions. Centuries later, Gabriel told Zechariah, an elderly priest, that his wife would give birth to John the Baptist.

Six months later, he visited a humble Jewish girl with this message: *"Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High"* (Luke 1:30).

That's a pretty overwhelming message. Mary was clearly shaken (who wouldn't be?) and was wondering how this would happen. She certainly never expected to see an angel or to receive special favors from heaven.

"How will this be," Mary asked, "since I am a virgin?"

Gabriel explained, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. The holy one to be born will be called the Son of God."

The Lord was with Mary, Gabriel said. The Lord's presence is the golden thread that runs through the lives of those God has touched and called. Mary is the ultimate example of honest humility and faith. She was not afraid to ask questions. I believe the Father loves when His children come to Him and ask questions like, "How will this be?"—then listen for an answer.

Mary listened, then responded, "I am the Lord's servant...May your word to me be fulfilled" (Luke 1:38, NIV).

Sometimes the Lord does something so unexpected, so beyond what we could imagine, that when He calls us, we have to ask and wonder, How will this be?

The question we have to ask ourselves is, can we surrender as Mary did?

We know her through the lens of history as the mother of Jesus and a revered figure in the Christian faith. But remember, she was a person like any of us, called by God. She was clearly strong enough

to endure a public embarrassment (pregnant before her official marriage), take a long donkey ride to Bethlehem while pregnant, give birth in a stable for animals, and witness the suffering of her Son. In fact, she was the only person who was with Jesus from birth to death.

But Mary was exceptional for her absolute trust that God would carry her through.

When we are surprised, shaken, afraid, but determined to follow the Lord wherever He takes us, may we sing with Mary:

"My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for He has been mindful of the humble state of His servant. From now on, all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me" (Luke 1:46-49, NIV).



Linda's Comments. . .

The story of Mary's visit by the angel Gabriel is one of my favorites in the Bible. Ray Bentley's comments express my thoughts very well.

Imagine yourself (gals – duh) as a young woman, even possibly a young teen, suddenly facing a very unusual being, or maybe just a human-looking stranger, who comes up to you and greets you warmly by your first name. Then he lays on you the greatest possible surprise, that you will become pregnant, even though you are a virgin. Wow! How would you feel? How would you respond?

I love Mary's response, which expressed her humble and willing spirit to do whatever God led her to do. What a beautiful spirit!

And then there was Zechariah, who also was confronted by Gabriel who broke to him the news that his elderly wife Elizabeth would also have a son, even though she was past the age of childbearing. Here is Luke's account in chapter 1.

Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear. But the angel said to him: "Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to call

him John. He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before he is born. He will bring back many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

Zechariah asked the angel, "How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well along in years."

The angel said to him, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news. And now you will be silent and not able to speak until the day this happens, because you did not believe my words, which will come true at their appointed time."

Somehow, something was different with Zechariah's response. On the surface, it seems similar to Mary's "How can this be?" However, Zechariah was given a nine month punishment – he was unable to speak until his son would be born.

So what was the difference? As Gommel (my dad) used to say, "It's the spirit, it's the spirit, it's the spirit", and "When the spirit's right, everything is right, and when the spirit isn't right, nothing is right." Zechariah's spirit wasn't right. He didn't ask in wonder "how can this be?" – he asked argumentatively and in doubt because it seemed impossible. Mary's spirit was humble, open, and appreciative.

When we are confronted with messages from God, which don't seem to come directly from angels these days, but come they do, "can we surrender as Mary did?"

Let us each determine to respond to God's call in humble surrender and obedience as Mary did. Especially when the message is "Follow Me", as Jesus repeatedly challenged those around Him. Our eternal lives depend on it.

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Linda Gommel

LVEDA Meeting

(Lucerne Valley Economic Development Association)

NO MEETING FOR DECEMBER!

Next meeting will be

Monday, Jan. 26, 2026

5:00 pm at the Moose Lodge

on Foothill Road, just west of Tradepost Road.

On The Lighter Side of Serious Stuff . . . from the Web

CHRISTMAS COOKIES?

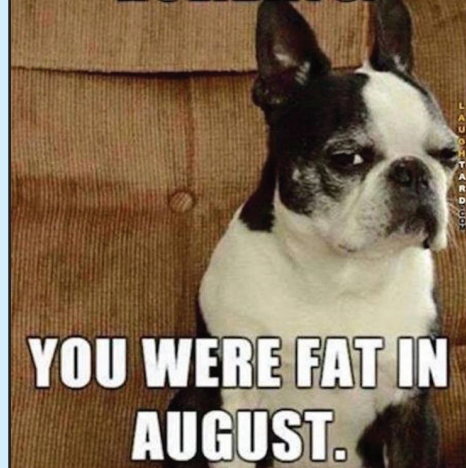


NO, I HAVEN'T SEEN ANY CHRISTMAS COOKIES

When you run out of Christmas wrapping paper



DON'T BLAME THE HOLIDAYS.



YOU WERE FAT IN AUGUST.

THANK GOODNESS YOU'RE HOME...



... THE CHRISTMAS TREE FAINTED.

When you realize your presence is a gift so you put yourself under the Christmas tree



MAKE THEM



STOP BLINKING