

Today is the fourth and final Sunday of Advent. On this day we light the Angels' Candle to remind ourselves of Christ's divinity and the blessings He brings to us. This candle's purple color emphasizes Jesus' royalty. Our Messiah is the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords!

God sent His angels four different times to prepare people for Jesus' arrival. In Luke 1:5-25 an angel appeared to Zechariah the priest to tell him that he would have a son (John the Baptist) whom God would use to prepare people for Jesus' coming. The angel Gabriel came to Mary in Luke 1:26-38 to prepare her to become Jesus' mother. Shortly thereafter Joseph received a visit from an angel who told him about Mary's miraculous pregnancy (Matthew 1:18-25). On the night Jesus was born, a whole company of angels announced His birth to a stunned group of shepherds (Luke 2:8-20).

A couple of weeks ago we looked at the angel Gabriel's appearance to Mary. We focused then on her response of faith. Today let's reread that passage and consider what Gabriel said about Jesus.

²⁶ In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, ²⁷ to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

²⁹ Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. ³⁰ But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. ³¹ You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, ³³ and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

³⁴ "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

³⁵ The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. ³⁶ Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. ³⁷ For no word from God will ever fail."

³⁸ "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me according to your word." Then the angel left her.

Luke 1:26-38 (TNIV)

Gabriel told Mary that her son would be the Son of God and that He would rule over the nation of Israel forever. These two aspects of Jesus' identity—that He is God and King—formed the heart of His ministry and the center of the controversy that surrounded Him throughout His life. Over the next few days we'll explore some of implications of Jesus' divinity and royalty.

Reflection and Discussion

- What attracts you to the idea that Jesus is God and that He is a King?
- Why do you think some people have difficulty accepting Jesus' divinity and His royalty?

Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for sending Your angels to prepare Mary and Joseph and others for Jesus' arrival. Thank You for preserving a record of their messages to help prepare our hearts during this Advent season. As we come to the last few days before Christmas, please enable us to focus on the gift You gave us. Use us, Father, to point others to that gift—Your Son and our Savior, Jesus.

Amen.