

# IMMANUEL – GOD WITH US

Mary, the mother of Jesus, was a young Jewish woman engaged to be married to Joseph. She lived in the town of Nazareth in Galilee. The angel, called Gabriel, was sent to Mary with a message from God.

He greeted her. 'Hail to you. You are highly favoured. The Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women.'

Mary was anxious about this visit. She could not understand at all.

'Do not be afraid, Mary,' the angel added, 'you have found favour with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son and shall call his name Jesus. He shall be a great king, the Son of the Highest.'

Mary was amazed. 'How can this happen? I am not married yet.'

'The Holy Spirit shall come upon you,' the angel replied, 'the power of God shall overshadow you. The holy child, whom you shall bear, will be the Son of God.'

Mary humbly acknowledged this wonderful fact. 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord,' she said. 'May what happens to me be according to your word.'

The angel left her.

Mary soon made a journey to the hill country of Judea to visit her cousin, Elizabeth. Elizabeth was old, but she was expecting a baby herself in three months' time. Her baby would grow up to be John the Baptist, a great preacher who would tell people that they would soon see Jesus.

As soon as Mary entered the house, the baby inside Elizabeth moved vigorously.

Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and called out loudly, 'Blessed are you among women and blessed is the child that you are bearing. Why has the mother of my Lord come to visit me?'

Mary then spoke words of praise and love to God her Saviour, for his goodness and mercy to her even although she was a poor woman.

After staying with Elizabeth for about three months, Mary went home to Nazareth.

When it became known that Mary was expecting a baby, Joseph to whom she was engaged, was rather perplexed about what to do.

An angel appeared to him in a dream. 'Joseph, son of David,' the angel said, 'do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for her child was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son and you will call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins.'

Would Joseph have remembered what was written in the book of the prophet Isaiah about the Messiah being born of a virgin?

Joseph was reassured and he took Mary to be his wife and he looked after her.

