**Advent 2**

Luke 1:26-56

Having narrated how the birth of a boy to an elderly couple was foretold by the angel, Luke now narrates another visit of the angel Gabriel to announce another boy’s birth. As we study this, it may be interesting to compare and contrast the two announcements and the way Luke describes them.

Luke 1:26-38 Jesus’ birth is foretold.

1:26-27

* In story telling terms, what does Luke achieve in these verses?
* What is different about this visitation?

1:28-33

* Compare Gabriel’s greeting to Mary with that of Zechariah, 1:13. Cf Judges 6:12
* How did Mary initially respond to this greeting and what was Gabriel’s response?
* Can you think of any OT characters who ‘found favour in God’s eyes? Genesis 6:8-9
* What were the main points of Gabriel’s message?
* What was the significance of being the son of the Most High? Genesis 14:19 & 22; Numbers 24:16; 2 Samuel 22:14;   
  Daniel 3:26; 4:17; 7:27
* How did he link this child with past and future?
* What is the significance of the name Jesus?

1:34-38

* Compare Mary’s response and the angel’s to the equivalent with Zechariah? vss 18-20
* What do we know about how the virgin conceived? vs 35
* Why do you think Gabriel told Mary about Elizabeth? vs 36
* Compare the two ladies and the prophecies about their forthcoming child-births?

1:39-45 Meeting of mothers-to-be

* Why do you think Mary went to visit Elizabeth? vs 39
* What happened when they met? vs 41
* What might be the significance of the timing of Elizabeth’s outburst?
* How did Elizabeth describe Mary? vss 42-45
* How does vs 45 summarise the announcement to Mary?

Luke 1:46-56 Mary’s song

This song is often called the ‘Magnificat’ after the opening words in Latin. It plays a significant part in worship in some Christian churches.

How does magnify become glorify? vs 46

This song is full of OT quotations, largely from the Psalms and Isaiah and bears a striking resemblance to Hannah’s song after the birth of Samuel following her long period of barrenness   
(1 Samuel 2:1-10).

1:46-48

* What is the basic attitude of these opening phrases?
* What might be the significance of speaking of God, my Saviour? cf Psalm 18:46;   
  Isaiah 17:10; Habakkuk 3:18
* What is Mary so grateful for?   
  cf Psalm 138:6

1:49-50

* What three aspects of God’s nature does Mary pick out? Cf Psalm 71:19; 111:9; 103:17

1:51-56

* What things does Mary claim that God has done? Cf Psalm 98:1; 2 Samuel 22:28;   
  Psalm 107:9; 98:3
* What is the significance of the tense in these verses?
* How might the second half of verse 51 summarise those not helped by God?
* What sort of God is Mary worshipping?

On Sunday, Ian suggested that Mary looked in the following directions:-

Forward – Upward – Outward – Inward – Onward

Having had another look at Mary’s song you might find it helpful to think through these different aspects of it and meditate on them again.