

WHAT WE FOUND

Luke opens like a historian: he investigated everything from the beginning, drew on what was handed down by the eyewitnesses, and wrote an orderly account so that Theophilus could know the certainty of what he had been taught. The word Luke uses for taught is *katecheo*, the root of catechesis. This study is that verse in action.

We met Gabriel twice, and traced him back to Daniel 9, where he delivered the seventy-weeks prophecy so many in the first century read as a messianic countdown. His reappearance after five centuries of silence is Luke's signal that the waiting is over. We compared Zechariah's question (give me proof) with Mary's (how will God do this) and found that faith is not the absence of questions but their direction. We mapped Gabriel's promise in Luke 1:32–33 onto the covenant with David in 2 Samuel 7, phrase by phrase: the child Mary is asked to bear is the King the promise had waited a thousand years for. And we sat with the greeting *kecharitomene*, having-been-and-remaining-graced, a title in place of her name.

MY GUESS: SEAL IT AND SIT ON IT

Gabriel told Mary the power of the Most High will **overshadow** you (Lk 1:35). Somewhere in the Old Testament, God's presence overshadows something. Write your guess below, then leave it alone. No looking it up, no comparing notes. We will open these together in a few weeks, and the answer is better than you think.

My guess: _____

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

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St. Irenaeus of Lyons (*Against Heresies* III, 22, 4)

The knot of Eve's disobedience was untied by Mary's obedience; what the virgin Eve bound through unbelief, the Virgin Mary loosed through faith. Written by a bishop who as a boy heard St. Polycarp, a disciple of the apostle John (one living link from the apostolic age), and quoted by the Catechism itself in CCC 494.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Ambrose of Milan (*Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke, Book II*)

Zechariah doubted and asked for proof; Mary, promised something far harder to believe, did not doubt but asked only how it would come about. Her question was faith seeking understanding, which is why the angel silenced one and answered the other.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Bernard of Clairvaux (*Homilies in Praise of the Blessed Virgin Mother, Homily 4*)

Bernard pictures all creation holding its breath between the angel's question and Mary's answer, the whole waiting world begging the Virgin to speak. Answer quickly, O Virgin, he pleads: speak the word that earth and heaven await.

LIVE IT THIS WEEK

- Pray the Angelus once a day, ideally at noon. The text is below.
- Look up CCC 494 and read the St. Irenaeus quotation slowly, once, out loud.
- Guard your sealed guess above. Resist the concordance.

THE ANGELUS

V. The angel of the Lord declared unto Mary. *R. And she conceived of the Holy Spirit.* Hail Mary...

V. Behold the handmaid of the Lord. *R. Be it done unto me according to thy word.* Hail Mary...

V. And the Word was made flesh. *R. And dwelt among us.* Hail Mary...

V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God. *R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.*

Let us pray: *Pour forth, we beseech thee, O Lord, thy grace into our hearts, that we, to whom the Incarnation of Christ thy Son was made known by the message of an angel, may by his Passion and Cross be brought to the glory of his Resurrection, through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.*

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

Luke 1:38 *Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.* (RSV2CE)

Before next session: read Luke 1:39–2:52, the Visitation, the Magnificat, the Nativity, and two trips to the Temple.

Catechism this week: CCC 484–486, 490–494, 2676.