

# Bite Size Bible Study

The Child #111

By Pastor Lee

By this time the whole town knew. In a small town it is hard to keep the secret when you're engaged and pregnant.

As she walked through the town, she felt that all eyes were staring at her. Some looked with curiosity, others with contempt. She felt alone in her own hometown. After all, she was only 15 and had not done anything wrong. But many were accusing her, and some were outwardly hostile towards her. She could almost hear them saying, "She was not even married yet, and now she is about to have a child? What's this world coming to?"

Her husband was busy working and learning the family trade. He, too, felt the uneasiness when he went about town. His conversations with people with whom he had grown up had become strained and awkward. He could hear some of them whispering behind his back, "Why did he even marry her? She obviously has no morals."

Something had changed in how the townspeople saw them. But what their friends thought they saw was not what had really happened. Trying to explain it to any of them now was dangerous and could bring them more ridicule, or even worse, a death sentence.

But Luke tells a different story:

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

*Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "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. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."*

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

Luke 1:26-35 NIV

The townspeople were looking for a messiah. But they were looking for a warrior, one riding on a white horse, ready to defeat Rome and renew Israel to its former glory.

But the trials continued. Now on top of all these things they were enduring, they were going to have to take a long trip that would put them away from home during the most likely time for their baby to be born. It would have been hard for a couple seasoned in years, but they had only just come out of childhood themselves and now they had to handle all of this rejection and the judgmental attitudes of others.

Fortunately they knew, without a doubt, that God had orchestrated the situation and would be with them every step of the way. As good as that felt, it was still hard to see so many of their family and one time friends acting so aloof or even antagonistic towards them.

Actually, things had gotten so bad at one point that she had gone to visit an older relative who lived several day's journey south of them, and stayed there with her three months. While she was there, the older and more experienced woman was able to help her to sort out the things that were happening and she was able to see her relative's baby born. When she returned to her husband, she was more resolute than ever about carrying out the job that God had given them.

As they prepared for the five-day walk to Bethlehem, packing the necessary supplies of water and food on the donkey, they wondered whether they would be able to make it there before the baby would be born. It was going to be a long and a hard journey and not one that a young pregnant woman in her 9<sup>th</sup> month would desire to make.

When they arrived, they found that there were so many people in town that there were no places to stay. They checked first with relatives, but their guest rooms had already been given to other friends and visiting relatives. But one relative said that they could stay in his house with sheltered animals. He was sorry, but that was the best he could do.

While they were there she gave birth to a son, swaddled him and laid him in one of the feeding troughs.

Thirty-three years later she watched as He was crucified and died for the sins of all mankind.

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