

# 25 Days of Advent

## Seeing Jesus Through the Eyes of the Christmas Story Characters

### ADVENT DAY 1: Dec. 1 – Angel Gabriel, God's Chosen Messenger

#### Devotional

Have you ever wondered what the angel who carried God's message to the world thought about that task? Gabriel was the angel chosen by God to tell:

- Zechariah that he and his wife would have a son who would prepare the way for God
- Mary that she would mother Christ
- Joseph that he should not be offended by Mary's pregnancy and marry her anyway
- The shepherds that their Savior was born and encourage them to tell the world
- Joseph again, to take his child, the son of God, to Egypt to avoid being slaughtered by a king

Those are challenging circumstances and very difficult messages! How can you convince someone well past their childbearing years that they will soon be a parent? What do you say to a young teenage girl who is cowering in your presence that she will become pregnant and bear a child even though she's never been with a man? How do you convince a man that the woman who was promised to him was pregnant (not by him) and that he should accept her and the child as his own anyway?

Was the task difficult? Did he understand the weight of his message and the historical turning point that he ushered into the world of humans? Did he face battles along the way, spiritual warfare with the enemy who certainly did NOT want to see God's son born to man?

In his book, *An Angel's Story*, author Max Lucado assumes a fierce and ongoing battle in the spiritual realm. In the angel Gabriel's view:

*We knew we could not fail. But we had no idea that the battle would come so soon. Suddenly I was entangled in an invisible net. Row after row of angels tumbled in upon me. Even the final flank was moving too fast to avoid the trap. Within moments we were a ball of confusion: wings flapping against wings; angels bumping into angels.*

According to the scenario Lucado envisions, that was the first of several spiritual battles between God's army of angels and Satan's cadre of demons before Gabriel even makes it to earth.

*On a wave of worship, I flew, this time alone. I circled through the clouds and over the ground. Below me was the city where Mary was born. The Father was right; I knew her in an instant. Her heart had no shadow. Her soul was as pure as any I've seen.*

*I made the final descent. "Mary." I kept my voice low so as not to startle her.*

*She turned but saw nothing. Then I realized I was invisible to her. I waved my wings before my body and incarnated. She covered her face at the light and shrank into the protection of the doorway.*

*"Don't be afraid," I urged.*

*The minute I spoke, she looked up toward the sky. Again I was amazed. I praised my Father for His wisdom. Her heart is so flawless, so willing. "Greetings. God be with you."*

*Her eyes widened, and she turned as if to run. "Mary, you have nothing to fear. You have found favor with God. You will become pregnant and give birth to a son and call His name Jesus. He will be great. He will be called the Son of the Highest. The Lord God will give him the throne of His father David; He will rule Jacob's house forever – no end, ever, to His kingdom."*

If I were Gabriel, I would have been thinking, "Are you kidding me Lord? They'll never believe those messages." And then, after carrying out his mission, apologizing to God for ever doubting Him. Gabriel finishes his assignment with Mary, makes sure she is willing, and leaves her as the Holy Spirit comes upon her, pleased he was able to do what God had entrusted to him and ready for his next assignment.

## Look Up – Connect with God

**Read:** Luke 1:26-38

**Key Verse:** "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 1:35)

**Pray:** Father God, thank you for Gabriel and his commitment to you. Thank you for Mary and her faith in you. Give us the determination and strength of Gabriel to accomplish what you call us to do. And give us the heart of Mary to be ready to obey no matter what you ask. May we be prepared for spiritual battle, and always remember to look up to you for help in our times of need.

## Look In – Family Memories

**Discuss:** Share with your family any spiritual battles you've faced in the past and how you were able to overcome them. Talk about things that seem too big to handle and ask God to help you attack them one small step at a time.

### Activity:

- Advent Tree: make or select an ornament of an angel and put it on the tree. [Download Ornaments](#) or [Ornament Ideas](#)

- Advent Garland: put the key verse on a paper/card, assign #1, and attach it to the garland twine. [Key Verses](#)
- Advent Cards: select a card and see what the activity might be (i.e., put up the Christmas decorations). [Family Activities](#)

### **Look Out – Connect with Others**

Look into ministries and nonprofit organizations in your town; check out those your church may have a partnership with – see if they have any Christmas wishes for those they serve and decide as a family to meet one or more of those needs this Advent season.