

ONE

Ordinary

In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, 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.

Luke 1:26–27

Two thousand years ago, a young girl had a divine encounter that changed the course of human history. God had not directly spoken to his people in over four hundred years. But at this specific moment in time, in the sixth month of her cousin's pregnancy, an angel appeared to Mary.

Mary called Nazareth home. This small town that bordered foreign territory produced no educated or important people. Mary and her fiancé, Joseph, had entered the legal and binding contract of engagement, as official as marriage, but without the full benefits of cohabitation. Unlike today, this serious commitment—usually made between the ages of twelve and sixteen—could only be dissolved through divorce. A contract had been signed and money had been exchanged. Celebrating the ceremony, building a home together, and starting a family would come a year later.²

While Mary could trace her lineage back to Israel's great King David, the royal blood running through her veins had long become insignificant, due to years of captivity and foreign domination of her people. Her soon-to-be husband, also of royal lineage through a different son of King David, was merely a carpenter. And Mary had not yet born sons. All this

would make her a nobody in the eyes of people in her world: an ordinary, young, unmarried peasant girl.

I too am ordinary—a middle class, Caucasian, married, middle-aged mother. I have asked myself, “What qualifications do I have to write a book?”

Mary spurs me on because despite her lack of credentials, she fulfilled this prophecy from Isaiah 7:14: “Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.” God knew her, saw her, and chose her for a unique commission.

REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

How about you? What credentials can you claim?

Where do you come from?

What makes you unique?

Don't let your location, hometown, race, gender, financial status, family background, lack of education, marital status, or anything else cause you to feel disqualified to be called or used of God.

PRAYER

Lord, thank you that you used a lowly peasant girl. Thank you that my credentials do not disqualify me from encountering you and being commissioned by you. I trust that you will be faithful to fulfill your plans through me.

FURTHER STUDY

Psalm 8:3–8

Psalm 139:13–16

1 Corinthians 1:26–31