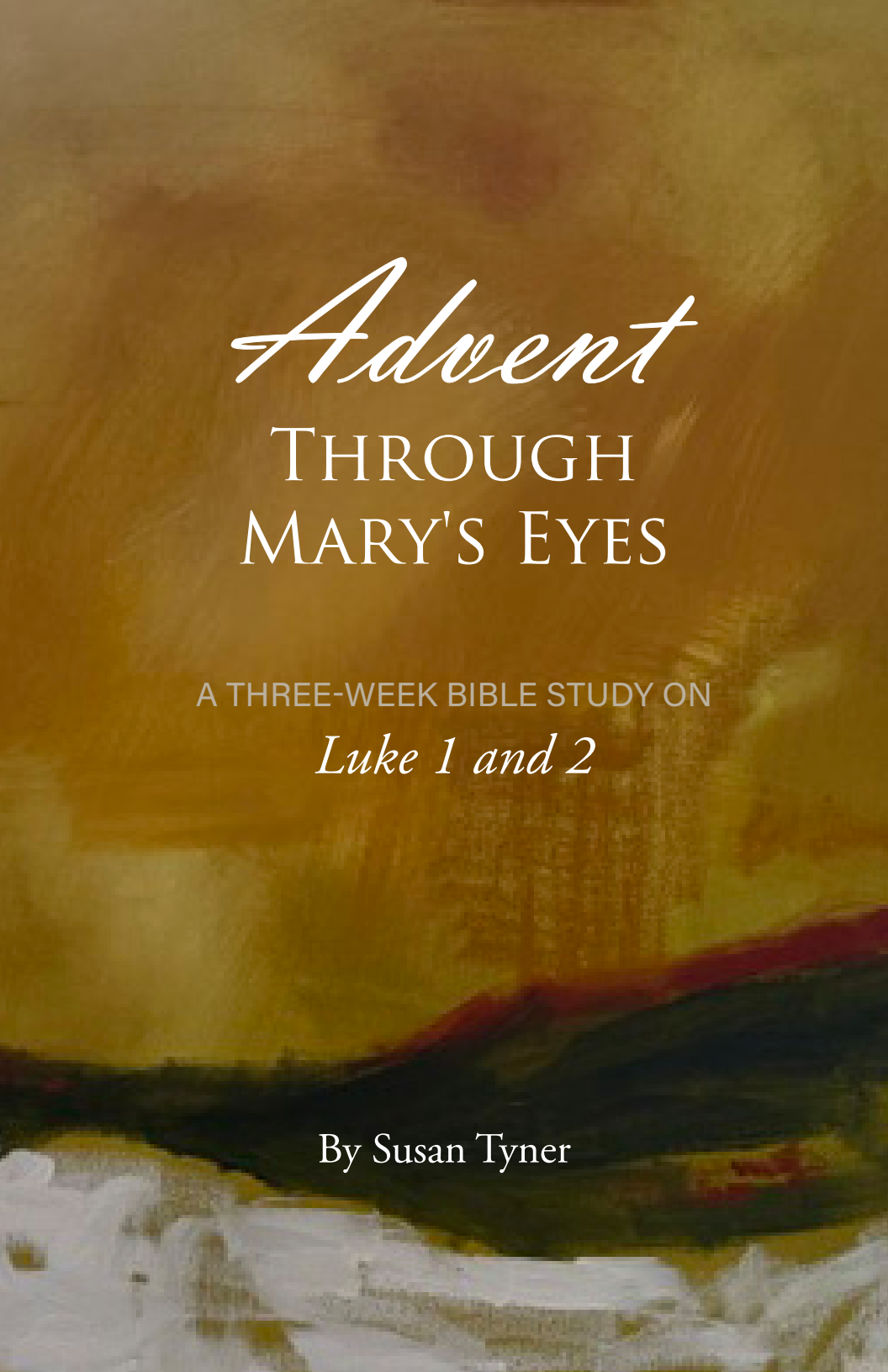

Advent
Through
Mary's Eyes
A THREE-WEEK BIBLE STUDY ON
Luke 1 and 2
By Susan Tyner

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This study is adapted from a previous study, *What's SHE Doing Here? The Messy Women in Jesus's Genealogy*. For more unlikely stories like Mary's, visit https://women.pcacdm.org/messy/.

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Lesson 1
Unexpected

Luke 1:26-38

26 In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city
of Galilee named Nazareth, 27 to a virgin betrothed to a man whose
name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was
Mary. 28 And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one,
the Lord is with you!" 29 But she was greatly troubled at the saying,
and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. 30 And the
angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor
with God. 31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a
son, and you shall call his name Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be
called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him
the throne of his father David, 33 and he will reign over the house of
Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

34 And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?"

35 And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you,
and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the
child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. 36 And behold,
your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and
this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. 37 For nothing
will be impossible with God." 38 And Mary said, "Behold, I am the
servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the
angel departed from her.

Memory Verse:

And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the
Lord; let it be to me according to your word."
– Luke 1:38

Day One: Mary's Story

Congrats! It's a boy!

Luke's Gospel opens with a strange baby announcement. Gabriel (one of God's top angels) visited two servants of God, telling them they would be having special babies. The fact that the mothers-to-be were either barren or a virgin does not seem to matter. As the archangel said, *with God nothing will be impossible* (Luke 1:37 NKJV).

1. Read Luke 1:1-45. Contrast Zechariah's response to Gabriel (1:18) with Mary's response to Gabriel (1:34).

2. How fully do you think Mary understood God's answer to her question in 1:34-37?

3. Name some things God is doing in your life that you do not quite fully understand.

Usually, the parents get to announce they are expecting a baby. But what happens when you are expecting the Messiah? A book called *What to Expect When You're Expecting the Messiah* did not exist to guide Mary and Joseph. Not only was the birth announcement odd, but who would have guessed a nobody from Nazareth would carry The Baby, the answer to all of Israel's hopes and prayers. Reminiscent of Mt. Carmel (1 Kings 18) when Elijah doused the wood with water before God lit it

on fire to prove His power, Mary's pregnancy seemed just as an unlikely and crazy way to show off His power and purposes of redemption.

Previously in Luke 1:1-25, the priest Zechariah was just as flabbergasted with Gabriel's news of an unexpected baby as Mary was, yet his response earned an archangel's rebuke. Zechariah responded with "How will I know?" The more experienced "church staffer" lost sight of *Who* was sending this unlikely word. Mary, although young and inexperienced, had questions but did not question God Himself. Although women today may not have Gabriel as a drop-by guest, many promises for us from God's Word seem impossible.

> Friends, what *did* we sign up for when we became followers of Jesus? Or asking it another way, what did we understand the Christian life to entail once we believed, committed, and began to follow Jesus? Were you told that Jesus blesses his followers with abundance and ease as a reward for forsaking sin, especially the ones we most enjoy? Maybe like many of us, you just assumed that a loving, gracious God would remove troubles, because after all, he has the power to do so![1]

4. What are the impossible things God is calling you to believe today?

[1] Ellen Dykas. "I Didn't Sign Up for This!" *enCourage* (blog). March 18, 2021, https://encourage.pcacdm.org/2021/03/18/post-template-213-117/.

5. Name ways you can imitate Mary's response of humble obedience in how you respond to God's call on your life.

As He did with Mary, God asks us to trust and obey Him even when we do not understand how He will make it happen. This kind of situation may look like an unexplainable peace in a cancer ward, the confidence to confront a close friend, or the ability to snuggle someone else's baby after your miscarriage. Those are impossible things to do on your own. The only way they happen is when Jesus's Spirit enlarges your heart to do them (Ps. 119:32). When faced with the impossible, we must repeat Mary's words—*behold, the maidservant of the Lord*—and remember the truth of Gabriel's *nothing is impossible with God.*

"You don't have to understand things for them to be."[2]

– Mrs. Murray

Day Two: God's Story

Imagine how shocked Mary was when Gabriel interrupted her day. Although she had grown up with the prophecies of *Immanuel, God with us*, she probably never dreamed her story would intersect in such a specific way with The Story.

[2] Madeline L'Engle. *A Wrinkle in Time* (Random House, Inc., 1962), 23.