

**December 19, 2021**  
La Jolla Christian Fellowship  
**A Star Is Born // Episode 4: Mary As First Responder**  
Pastor Jim Smith

**God's OT "Good News"/Gospel Promise/Prophecy through Isaiah (8<sup>th</sup>c BC)**

- "The Lord himself will give you a sign: the virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him *Immanuel*, *God with us*" (7:14) > 'Joseph, what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will birth a son, and you shall call his name *Yeshua*, for he will save his people from their sins.' This took place to fulfill what the Lord said through the prophet." (Mt. 1:20-23)
- "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the governance will be on his shoulders. He will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace..." (9:6)

**We serve a God who keeps promises – and often desires to do so through us.  
Meeting challenges, we may become "first responders" – like the Virgin Mary.**

**God invites Mary into the Plan... and welcomes questions (Luke 1:26-37)**

"How [in the name of biology, identity and reputation] can this be?" v. 34

**God in-forms our role... as we seek > choose divine guidance (Luke 1:38-45)**

"I'm the Lord's servant: let it be to me according to your Word." v. 38

**God is often seen through the lens we offer: beyond 'awful' to 'awesome' (Luke 1:46-56)**

"My soul magnifies/glorifies the Lord; my spirit rejoices in my Savior." v. 46-47

**God indwells us as we cradle life's miracles & mysteries... (Luke 2:1-21; see John 2:5)**

"Mary treasured these things and pondered them in her heart." v. 19

**"Mary is the one who hears the Word of God and responds in faith...  
Had she not believed, she would not have conceived. When we praise and love Mary, it is God whom  
we praise for his gracious favor to his chosen handmaid." – Dr. Timothy F. George (CT, 2003)**

**Small Group Questions:**

- 1) Is 'waiting' a desert between where you are and you want to be – or are you 'God's waiter'?
- 2) What's the 'awe\_\_\_\_\_' news, plot, role, situation or position you're experiencing right now?
- 3) Which of Mary's lines (wonder, obedience, celebration, contemplation) is most fruitful?
- 4) Open your Christmas gift: God with us (Heb. 2:17), His love overcoming our fears (I Jn 4:18)?
- 5) Prayer: 'Breath of heaven, hold me together!' (Col. 1:10-20) How's the Spirit working in you?

**"God Himself is with us: let us all adore Him, and with awe appear before him...  
Come abide within me; let my soul – like Mary – be thy earthly sanctuary..."  
- Gerhard Tersteegen hymn (1729)**