

How Luke 1:35 Power Changed Mary—and Can Change You

Aren't you thankful for God's Word and the way it draws us into conversation with him? Conversing with the Lord of the universe usually goes beyond the typical surface comments people would make to one another. Why would you ask the Creator, "What do you think about this weather we're having?" After all, he orchestrated the forecast and could change it if he wanted something different!

Conversation with the Word Incarnate often draws me to inquire about the deeper meaning of what Abba is saying to me personally or to others whose lives intersect with mine. Early one morning during this advent season, I was drawn to search for a deeper meaning behind the angel's explanation to Mary in Luke 1:35: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you. Therefore the Holy One who will be born will be called the Son of God."

What was it like for Mary to be "overshadowed" by the power of the Most High God? What would it mean for us to have a similar experience?

Having an encounter with an angel was startling enough, but to have Gabriel explain the phenomenon of how Mary, as a virgin, would conceive a child had to have been overwhelmingly more than a young handmaiden could comprehend or process. She must have wondered how the sacred, holy wind, the breath of God, would come upon her.

Would it be a gentle, perhaps even subtle and almost imperceptible, movement of air? Would she experience an animated moment in her emotional processes? Perhaps a relatively rational thought would cause her to perceive a change occurring in her mind and body. Undoubtedly, she was

old enough to be acquainted with her own body's rhythm and function. Even more dramatic and yet elusive, she may have sensed God's Spirit actively exerting influence upon hers. Somehow, I believe the original meaning of "to come upon" has a much stronger connotation than any of these possibilities.

Surely when the holy breath of heaven blows upon any of us, we are inevitably affected like someone who has experienced the impact of a strong but gentle blast of wind. Of course, Holy Spirit would have been a perfect gentleman with this young virgin, who had been told not to be afraid or fearful. This intensified coming would not only change the natural processes of Mary's body, it would powerfully affect all of humanity for all of time.

The *dunamis*—mighty power and marvelous working of God—is still exerting miraculous moral, spiritual and physical change that is evident to all who recognize and embrace His holy wind.

This daughter of low estate experienced the superlative heights of transcendent God come down and envelop her like a cloud enshrouds a mountaintop until it is no longer visible. Not some dark shadow but a haze of such brilliance it would have obscured everything around Mary. Any distractions which might have hindered her transformation from simple and common to life-filled and sacred were hidden from view. She was now impregnated with the Son of God.

Father, would You do it again in our lives? Please send your messenger of hope to assuage our fears and cause us to believe in the miraculous once again. Cause Your sacred and gentle, yet powerful wind to blow. Breathe new anticipation in our hearts and minds. Change the natural (fallen) processes of our thinking and living into powerful, transformative action.

Let the brilliance of Your glory be seen as we are enveloped by the cloud that reflects the light of heaven and not the darkness of earthly creatures. Move us into the arena of life-

giving ministry and influence in our world! {eoa}

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