Our scripture comes from Luke 1:26-38. While you’re finding that - It was the night of the children's Christmas play and little Johnny was upset because he didn't get the part of Joseph.  He was assigned the inn keeper. Johnny was still a little bitter, when Joseph and Mary arrived at the inn to ask if there was room. Deciding to ruin the play, little Johnny said, "Sure, come on in!" The little boy playing Jospeh looked around and said, "Nah - This place is a dump. I'd rather stay in the barn."

**Luke 1:26-38 26Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, 27to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin’s name *was* Mary. 28And having come in, the angel said to her, “Rejoice, highly favored *one,* the Lord *is* with you; blessed *are* you among women!” 29But when she saw *him,* she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. 30Then the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. 32He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. 33And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.” 34Then Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I do not know a man?” 35And the angel answered and said to her, “*The* Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God. 36Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren. 37For with God nothing will be impossible.” 38Then Mary said, “Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.**

 People make choices every second. Some choices are small and seem insignificant, some are large and seem huge. We all make choices – what to eat, what to wear, whether to be in church this morning was a choice, it was a choice to meet God, a choice to be in communion with His people.

 God knows His vessels – 200 years before King Cyrus released the Jews to return to Jerusalem, Isaiah prophesied Cyrus by name. Cyrus was the Lord’s vessel. 700 years before Mary is born, Isaiah 7:14 says - Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel. Mary was God’s vessel. Verses 26 & 27 fulfills this - **26Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, 27to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin’s name *was* Mary.**

 But having something revealed by an angel doesn’t decide the matter. The Christmas story is all about choice. Mary made a choice. Joseph made a choice. The shepherds got up and went. Our God is a gracious God of choice. He calls us to be His vessels, to be part of His plan, but He doesn’t force. We’re not robots playing out a computer program. An all-knowing God knows our choices before we make them, but make no mistake – we make our own choices – good or bad, right or wrong, righteous or unrighteous.

 In verse 38, Mary chooses to be a vessel for God **38Then Mary said, “Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.** In Matthew 1, Joseph receives revelation from an angel. In verse 24, Joseph makes a choice to be God’s vessel - Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife. In Luke 2, the shepherds receive revelation from an angel and in verse 15, they make a choice - So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, “Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us.”

 We too must make that choice for God. God reveals Himself through the Bible, in prayer, through the words and works of others, but we must make that eternal choice to turn from our sin and become His vessel. 2 Timothy 2 20-21 But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work. It’s not enough to understand God. Many people intellectually know God. The biggest leap of faith we’ll ever make is the leap between knowing God in our heads and placing God in our hearts. Not a very big distance, but it’s a journey many never make. We must move Christ from our head to our hearts.

 Revelation is not resolve. Understanding is not action. Hearing God’s call is not following God’s plan. Matthew 22:14 says - For many are called, but few are chosen. Who are the chosen? Matthew 7:13 & 14 tells us - “Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it. Mary chose to enter by the narrow gate – risking her very life to give birth to Immanuel. Being God’s vessel is a choice that requires our complete devotion.

Have you made that choice? Have you entered by the narrow gate? Moving Christ from head to heart. Today, in this Christmas season, make that choice. We are vessels when we hear and answer God’s call on our life, sacrificing whatever we must to do His sovereign will.