

Mary, the Mother of Jesus

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Jesus' birth

a) Luke 1:26-56

[verses 26-38]

The angel appears to Mary and tells her that

- ✓ she will be mother of the Messiah.
- ✓ His name will be Jesus
- ✓ He will be the Son of God
- ✓ the Holy Spirit will cause her pregnancy - not a man

[verses 39-45] Mary goes to visit Elizabeth

Elizabeth said... ⁴³ *"Why has this good thing happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me?"* ⁴⁴ *When I heard your voice, the baby inside me jumped with joy.* ⁴⁵ *You are blessed because you believed that what the Lord said to you would really happen."*

[verses 46-56] Mary's song of praise -- the *Magnificat*

⁴⁶ *Then Mary said, "My soul praises the Lord;*
⁴⁷ *my heart rejoices in God my Savior,*
⁴⁸ *because he has shown his concern for his humble servant girl.*
From now on, all people will say that I am blessed..."

b) Matthew 1:18-25

Joseph learns that Mary is pregnant. He knows that he is not the father. He plans to break the engagement. An angel appears to Joseph in a dream and tells him...

"... the baby in her is from the Holy Spirit.²¹ She will give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

²⁴ *When Joseph woke up, he did what the Lord's angel had told him to do. Joseph took Mary as his wife,²⁵ but he did not have sexual relations with her until she gave birth to the son. And Joseph named him Jesus.*

From now on God leads the couple through Joseph.

c) Luke 2:1-40

[verses 1-20] This is the familiar Christmas story.

- ✓ The census & trip to Bethlehem
- ✓ Birth, manger, and no room in the inn.
- ✓ The shepherds

¹⁹ *But Mary treasured these things and continued to think about them.* [NCV]

¹⁹ *But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.* [KJV]

[verses 21-40] the first month

- ✓ circumcision (8th day)
- ✓ to the temple, law of purification, consecration of the firstborn

OT background on the consecration of the firstborn -- what and why?

See Exodus 13:1 & 11-15

This ritual is a reminder to every generation of Israel that their freedom from slavery was won at the price of the firstborn males of the Egyptians - both people and animals. Therefore, the firstborn males of Israel also belong to the Lord -- both people and animals. The animals may be offered in sacrifice, or they may be "redeemed" by the sacrifice of "two doves or two young pigeons." The firstborn people *must* be redeemed by an animal substitute.

Jesus, the "firstborn" Son of God died - like the Egyptian firstborn - to win our freedom from slavery to sin and Satan.

While at the temple, Mary and Joseph met two interesting old people

- ✓ Simeon

²⁹ *"Now, Lord, you can let me, your servant,
die in peace as you said.
³⁰ With my own eyes I have seen your salvation,
³¹ which you prepared before all people.
³² It is a light for the non-Jewish people to see
and an honor for your people, the Israelites."*

Then Simeon said to Mary...

"God has chosen this child to cause the fall and rise of many in Israel. He will be a sign from God that many people will not accept ³⁵ so that the thoughts of many will be made known. And the things that will happen will make your heart sad, too." [NCV]

"Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against (yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." [NKJV]

We know that the pain that will touch Mary's heart will be watching her innocent son suffer and die on the cross.

- ✓ Anna

d) Matthew 2:1-23 Wise Men visit

Try to imagine this event as Mary experienced it.

⁹ After the wise men heard the king, they left. The star that they had seen in the east went before them until it stopped above the place where the child was.¹⁰ When the wise men saw the star, they were filled with joy.¹¹ They came to the house where the child was and saw him with his mother, Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. They opened their gifts and gave him treasures of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Most Christmas scenes show the Wise Men visiting in the stable. Sorry, but that picture is wrong. Jesus was more than a month old. He may have even been two years old. By this time Joseph and Mary moved out of the stable into a house. It seems that they planned to settle there in Bethlehem, where their family roots were. But God suddenly changed their plans... again.

¹² But God warned the wise men in a dream not to go back to Herod, so they returned to their own country by a different way.

¹³ After they left, an angel of the Lord came to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up! Take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt, because Herod is starting to look for the child so he can kill him. Stay in Egypt until I tell you to return."

¹⁴ So Joseph got up and left for Egypt during the night with the child and his mother.¹⁵ And Joseph stayed in Egypt until Herod died. This happened to bring about what the Lord had said through the prophet: "I called my son out of Egypt."

King Herod ordered his soldiers kill all the male children in Bethlehem, two years old and under.

¹⁹ After Herod died, an angel of the Lord spoke to Joseph in a dream while he was in Egypt.²⁰ The angel said, "Get up! Take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, because the people who were trying to kill the child are now dead."

²¹ So Joseph took the child and his mother and went to Israel.²² But he heard that Archelaus was now king in Judea since his father Herod had died. So Joseph was afraid to go there. After being warned in a dream, he went to the area of Galilee,²³ to a town called Nazareth, and lived there.

e) Boy Jesus in the temple Luke 2:41-52

Here even though Jesus is only 12 years old, He clearly shows that knows who He is, and that He must remind Mary and Joseph.

⁴¹ Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the Passover Feast.⁴² When he was twelve years old, they went to the feast as they always did.⁴³ After the feast days were over, they started home. The boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it.⁴⁴ Thinking that Jesus was with them in the group, they traveled for a whole day. Then they began to look for him among their family and friends.⁴⁵ When they did not find him, they went back

to Jerusalem to look for him there. ⁴⁶ After three days they found Jesus sitting in the Temple with the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷ All who heard him were amazed at his understanding and answers. ⁴⁸ When Jesus' parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, "Son, why did you do this to us? Your father and I were very worried about you and have been looking for you."

⁴⁹ Jesus said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Didn't you know that I must be in my Father's house?"⁵⁰ But they did not understand the meaning of what he said.

⁵¹ Jesus went with them to Nazareth and was obedient to them. But his mother kept in her mind all that had happened.⁵² Jesus became wiser and grew physically. People liked him, and he pleased God.

f) Wedding at Cana John 2:1-12

... there was a wedding in the town of Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there,² and Jesus and his followers were also invited to the wedding.³ When all the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine."

⁴ Jesus answered, "Dear woman, why come to me? My time has not yet come."

⁵ His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you to do."

The rest of the story is about Jesus turning water into wine. But Mary's part in the story is finished here.

Mary's involvement in wedding is a bit curious. Why was the wine supply any of her business? How could she give orders to the kitchen staff? Was she there as more than a guest? Was she recruited as a friend of the family to help prepare and serve the buffet?

This must have been a big wedding -- which explains why they ran out of wine, and why Jesus made so much more wine.

What is interesting here is Mary's relationship with Jesus. Notice that Joseph is absent from the story. This is the first time since Jesus' birth that we encounter Mary without Joseph. And Joseph never appears any more in Gospels. This leads us to speculate that Joseph may have died. There is a later reference to "the carpenter" Joseph as the presumed father of Jesus (*Matthew 13:55*), but that text does not tell us whether or not Joseph was still alive. If Joseph died, then the responsibility for caring for the family falls on the oldest adult son, which would be Jesus. So when Mary had a need and could not recruit Joseph's help, Jesus was next in line.

Jesus' response to Mary's concern sounds odd -- Jesus really seems rude to Mary. But obviously they had a good relationship, and Mary interpreted Jesus' answer not as a brush off, but that Jesus had everything under control. She clearly communicated that to the kitchen staff.

Negative reputation about Jesus' birth.

g) John 8:41

When Mary became pregnant before she was married, folks gossiped about that. And the gossip never stopped. There was always a question as to who Jesus' father really was.

³⁷ [Jesus said,] *"I know you are Abraham's children, but you want to kill me because you don't accept my teaching. ³⁸ I am telling you what my Father has shown me, but you do what your father has told you."*

³⁹ *They answered, "Our father is Abraham."*

Jesus said, "If you were really Abraham's children, you would do the things Abraham did. ⁴⁰ I am a man who has told you the truth which I heard from God, but you are trying to kill me. Abraham did nothing like that. ⁴¹ So you are doing the things your own father did."

But they said, "We are not like children who never knew who their father was. God is our Father; he is the only Father we have."

Jesus rejected by in his immediate family

h) John 7:5

Even Jesus' brothers did not believe in him.

i) Mark 3:21

²⁰ *Then Jesus went home, but again a crowd gathered. There were so many people that Jesus and his followers could not eat. ²¹ When his family heard this, they went to get him because they thought he was out of his mind.*

j) Mark 3:31-35

³¹ *Then Jesus' mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to tell him to come out. ³² Many people were sitting around Jesus, and they said to him, "Your mother and brothers are waiting for you outside."*

³³ *Jesus asked, "Who are my mother and my brothers?" ³⁴ Then he looked at those sitting around him and said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! ³⁵ My true brother and sister and mother are those who do what God wants."*

Notice that Joseph is not mentioned here. Joseph's absence in the rest of the gospel story leads us to guess that he has died. This becomes obvious later when Jesus is crucified.

Jesus rejected in Nazareth

The local folks in Nazareth did not think that Jesus or his family were special. The people did not like the things that Jesus said about himself...

k) John 6:42

⁴¹ *The Jews began to complain about Jesus because he said, "I am the bread that comes down from heaven." ⁴² They said, "This is Jesus, the son of Joseph. We know his father and mother. How can he say, 'I came down from heaven'?"*

l) Mark 6:1-3

Jesus left there and went to his hometown, and his followers went with him.² On the Sabbath day he taught in the synagogue. Many people heard him and were amazed, saying, "Where did this man get these teachings? What is this wisdom that has been given to him? And where did he get the power to do miracles?"³ He is just the carpenter, the son of Mary and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas, and Simon. And his sisters are here with us." So the people were upset with Jesus.⁴ Jesus said to them, "A prophet is honored everywhere except in his hometown and with his own people and in his own home."

At Jesus' Crucifixion

m) John 19:25-27

Mary and her women friends watched as Jesus was crucified, fulfilling Simeon's prophecy from Luke 2.

²⁵ Standing near his cross were Jesus' mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.²⁶ When Jesus saw his mother and the follower he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Dear woman, here is your son."²⁷ Then he said to the follower, "Here is your mother." From that time on, the follower took her to live in his home.

Where were Jesus' other brothers? Remember, they didn't believe in Him. Jesus was the oldest son and was responsible for His widowed mother. So Jesus, on the cross, gives His disciple John responsibility to care for His mother.

After ascension

n) Acts 1:9-14

¹² Then they [the 11 Disciples] went back to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives. (This mountain is about half a mile from Jerusalem.)¹³ When they entered the city, they went to the upstairs room where they were staying...¹⁴ They all continued praying together with some women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, and Jesus' brothers.

What!?! Jesus' brothers? Yes. According to Paul (1 Corinthians 15:7), Jesus appeared to His brothers after His resurrection. The eldest of the four younger brother, James, became the senior pastor of the Christian church in Jerusalem.

Final thoughts

Mary was not a perfect person. She was a sinner, just like us. After Jesus' resurrection, she understood His purpose and mission. She also trusted Him as her Lord and Savior.

Unfortunately, there are many false teachings about Mary, that have no basis in Scripture. The Roman Catholic Church teaches that:

- (1) Mary was sinless, same as Jesus. [This is the doctrine of "the immaculate conception."]*
- (2) Mary was always a virgin; Mary and Joseph never had sex together.*
- (3) After Mary's death, her body was transported directly to heaven. [This is the doctrine of "the bodily assumption."]*
- (4) Mary is the "Mother of God" and "the Queen of Heaven."*
- (5) Christian people can (and should) pray to Mary, expecting that she will speak to her son on our behalf.*
- (6) Mary has appeared to people in visions, for the purpose of reinforcing Catholic teaching.*

All these doctrines and traditions are clearly against what the Bible teaches.

However, Mary is our sister in the Lord, and she is a wonderful example of faith and obedience.