



# Mary

Woman of Faith, Purity, Courage, Trust, Worthiness

# The Story of Mary

## **Luke 1: 26-38**

God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a village in Galilee, to a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of King David. Gabriel appeared to her and said, "Greeting, favored woman! The Lord is with you!" Confused and disturbed, Mary tried to think what the angel could mean.

"Don't be frightened, Mary," the angel told her, "for God has decided to bless you! You will become pregnant and have a son, and you are to name him Jesus. He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David. And he will reign over Israel forever; his kingdom will never end!"

Mary asked the angel, "But how can I have a baby? I am a virgin." The angel replied, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the baby born to you will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God." Mary responded, "I am the Lord's servant, and I am willing to accept whatever he wants. May whatever you have said come true." And the angel left.

## **Matthew 2:1-12**

At that time the Roman emperor, Augustus, decreed that a census should be taken throughout the Roman Empire. All returned to their own towns to register for this census. And because Joseph was a descendant of King David, he had to go to Bethlehem in Judea, David's ancient home. He traveled there from the village of Nazareth in Galilee.

He took with him Mary, his fiancée, who was obviously pregnant by this time. And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born. She gave birth to her first child, a son. She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the village inn.

That night some shepherds were in the fields outside the village, guarding their flocks of sheep. Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them.

They were terribly frightened, but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news of great joy for everyone! The Savior – yes, the Messiah, the Lord – has been born tonight in Bethlehem, the city of David! And this is how you will recognize him: You will find a baby lying in a manger wrapped snugly in strips of cloth!"

Suddenly the angel was joined by a vast host of others – the armies of heaven – praising God:

**"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to all whom God favors."**

When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, "Come on, let's go to Bethlehem! Let's see this wonderful thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

They ran to the village and found Mary and Joseph. And there was the baby, lying in the manger. Then the shepherds told everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about the child.

All who heard the shepherd's story were astonished, but Mary quietly treasured these things in her heart and thought about them often. The shepherds went back to their fields and flocks, glorifying and praising God for what the angels had told them, and because they had seen the child, just as the angel had said.

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him." When King Herod heard this, he was disturbed and all Jerusalem with him.

When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written. But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judea, are by no means least among the rulers of Judea, for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people of Israel."

Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him."

After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

### **Matthew 2:19-23**

When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child and kill him." So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: "Out of Egypt I called my son."

When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi. After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child's life are dead." So he got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel.

But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Having been warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee, and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets: "He will be called the Nazarene."

### **Luke 2:41-51**

Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the Passover festival. When Jesus was twelve years old, they attended the festival as usual. After the celebration was over, they started home to Nazareth, but Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents didn't miss him at first, because they assumed he was with friends among the other travelers.

But when he didn't show up that evening, they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. When they couldn't find him, they went back to Jerusalem to search for him there. Three days later they finally discovered him. He was in the temple sitting among the religious teachers, discussing deep questions with them.

And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. His parents didn't know what to think. "Son!" his mother said to him. "Why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been frantic, searching for you everywhere." "But why did you need to search?" he asked. "You should have known that I would be in my Father's house." But they didn't understand what he meant. Then he returned to Nazareth with them and was obedient; and his mother stored all these things in her heart.

### **John 2:1-11**

On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him. "They have no more wine."

"Woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My hour has not yet come." His mother said to the servants. "Do whatever he tells you." Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons. Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water." So they filled them to the brim. Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet."

They did so, and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned to wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside and said, "Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now." What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which he revealed his glory; and his disciples put their faith in him.

### **Luke 8:19-21**

Once Jesus' mother and brothers came to see him, they couldn't get to him because of the crowd. Someone told him, "Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to see you." He replied, "My mother and brothers are those who hear God's word and put it into practice."

### **John 19: 25-27**

Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, "Woman, here is your son," and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

### **John 19: 38-40**

Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, because he feared the Jewish leaders. With Pilate's permission he came and took the body away. He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night.

Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds. Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs.

# Study Guide

Read the Story of Mary, and discuss the following questions. Mary was young, poor, and female; all of which in her time among her people would have made her a poor candidate to be chosen by God to fulfill any task, let alone to become the mother of the Messiah. But as we have seen, the humble, devoted, and open-hearted are in fact the very ones God favors. Let's examine the life of this extraordinary young woman as there is always more to the story than one might expect.

**1. When Mary was born, her father was hoping for a son and already had an older daughter named Mary. Why do you think he named his younger daughter Mary too?**

- When she was born, she had a sweetness about her that he could not resist even though she was not the son he hoped for.
- He may have had a 'feeling' about her as her name means one who suffers, as only a mother who watches her child die can suffer.

**2. When the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary and announced that she had been chosen of all women by God to be the mother of the Messiah, it must have been a terrifying experience for a young peasant girl; yet she agreed and for her obedience to God she was blessed. However, this blessing came accompanied by great pain. What happened when she told others she was to give birth to the Messiah?**

- She was ridiculed by her peers and Joseph, her fiancé, almost left her.

**3. Before their marriage, she told Joseph she was pregnant, but still a virgin. Joseph had a hard time accepting this. Joseph was a good man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he decided to break the engagement quietly. His only other option was to have her stoned. What stopped Joseph from leaving her?**

- As he considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared and explained that he need not be afraid to take Mary as his wife for she was pregnant by the Holy Spirit and would give birth to the Messiah and he was to name him Jesus.

**4. What attributes did Joseph have that qualified him to become Jesus' earthly father?**

- He was a man of great integrity, open to guidance from God, and ready to do God's will.
- Joseph took his family every year to the Passover in Jerusalem, providing good spiritual guidance for Jesus.

**5. Roman emperor Augustus declared that everyone must return to the home of their ancestors and register for the census. Mary was noticeably pregnant by this time and if she stayed in Nazareth, would have had the support of her mother to help with the delivery of her first child. What would her experience be now that she could not stay with her mother?**

- First, being noticeably pregnant, she had to ride a donkey from Nazareth to Bethlehem. For anyone who has ever been pregnant, you would know that was not an easy task.
- She must have had some instruction and guidance from her mother on what to expect and a few supplies for the delivery.
- When the time came for Jesus to be born and there was no room available in the inn for them, they had to bed down with the animals in a stable, which in that time may have been a cave. Since men of the time did not participate in delivery of babies, Mary very well may have delivered her baby alone.

**6. What conditions would you expect the Son of God to be born in?**

- Most anticipated that the Son of God would be born in royal surroundings. Instead, he was born in a humble and unsanitary stable and laid into a manger used to feed animals.

**7. What is the significance of the Star the wise men followed?**

- The wise men were astrologers and the star foretold of the coming of the Messiah.

**8. Why did they bring Frankincense, Myrrh, and Gold as the gifts for Jesus?**

- Frankincense was used for spiritual worship and was one of the most precious possessions a person could own.
- Myrrh was the most costly incense resin in antiquity and was worth more than jewels and gold. Mary would have used Myrrh to disinfect the naval when the cord detached, and to keep herself and the infant Jesus from developing infection from the unsanitary conditions.
- Gold was the least valuable of all the gifts, but still had significant worth.
- All together, the three gifts represented a considerable wealth.

**9. What did the wise men do that alerted Herod of the birth of the Messiah?**

- Upon arrival in Jerusalem they went to Herod and asked where they might find the baby who was the Messiah foretold in prophecy as they wanted to worship him and bestow upon him the gifts they had brought. Herod told them to return and tell him where they found the newborn Messiah so he could worship him too.

**10. When Herod ordered all the boys two years old and under living in and around Bethlehem to be killed, how did Joseph save Jesus?**

- Joseph was visited by an angel of the Lord and told to flee to Egypt that very night as Jesus' life was in danger and he would be killed.

**11. When Jesus was twelve, he went with his family to Jerusalem for the annual Passover festival and when it was over and they started home, he was accidentally left behind. Where did they find him and what did he say to them and what did that mean to Mary?**

- He was not concerned about staying behind. After three days of searching, they finally found him at a temple, sitting among the religious teachers listening and asking questions. He told them not to worry; he was in his father's house.
- Mary must have known a day would come when he would be less her son and more the Son of God. Although she had other sons, Jesus would have been special to Mary and hard to let go of. It can be very difficult to let go of those we have nurtured.

**12. Mary, Jesus and his disciples were attending a wedding in Cana when the host ran out of wine. Mary asked Jesus to help find some wine, but Jesus said, "It is not yet my time." Mary then told the servants to do as Jesus told them. This resulted in Jesus' first public miracle. What was it, and what can we learn about God from it?**

- Jesus told the servants to bring the empty water jars used for ritual cleansing to the table and fill them with fresh water. Then he told them to fill the wine glasses.
- The resulting wine was declared to be the best of the entire party. If we allow God to give us what he wants instead of what we want, it is always better than what we asked for.

**13. Mary was a good and loving mother to Jesus and remained obedient to God throughout her life. She was the only person present at Jesus' birth that was also present at his death. She had to watch her son be rejected and made to suffer on the cross by the very people he had come to save. His crucifixion and death must have been horrifying and heartbreaking to Mary. What can we learn from Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection?**

- That life is eternal. Although we may shed our physical body, the spiritual body is eternal.

## *What If...*

Mary, the mother of Jesus, is the most famous woman of the bible and one who is known around the world. She has had more sightings around the world than Jesus has over the last 2000 years.

She has been given credit for the healing at Fatima and other religious sites, while modern day people have reported her appearing before them while praying when they were in great need.

While in prayer to Mary, some have experienced the fragrance of roses in the air which is not surprising since it is reported to be the flower with the highest frequency.

A woman loved today as much as when she walked the holy land over 2000 years ago. She is not a woman who can be claimed by only one religion or theology as she truly belongs to all of us. She is sought by many because she is sympathetic and compassionate.

The blend dedicated to her represents these attributes and her Divine Mother presence.



## *Aromas & Your Emotions...*

How often has the aroma of a freshly baked pizza instantly lifted your spirits? Think back to the last time you inhaled the aroma of cookies in the oven. If you pay close attention you'll notice your body instantly start to relax.

Does the smell of a hospital or the aroma in a doctor's office set your heart racing or your palms sweating?

Another great example of aromatic emotions would be the agitation and grief we feel when we smell lilies. Without you knowing it, your limbic system has stored and connected the aroma of lilies to attendance at a funeral; thus the emotion of grief or agitation.

This is part of the reason why not everyone likes the same smells. The aromatic emotions stored in each of our brains are as different from each other as the experiences we had when we first inhaled the aroma.

When you think about the good times and, yes, the bad times too, you will realize that they each have an aroma attached to them. Our memories don't decide to keep only the good things that occur in our lives.

Our body, specifically the limbic system in our brain, stores all of our memories, and with them, the aromas that were present at that time.