

MARY

Fascinating Facts About The Mother Of Jesus

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Nazareth, a "nobody" town in Galilee. Mary, an unknown teenager. Suddenly, it happened--the angel Gabriel; cousin Elizabeth; prophetic utterances; a pregnancy without sex; the Baby; shepherds; more angels; wise men from the east.

Today, that maiden from Nazareth is the most revered woman in history. So, who is she?

Dismiss The Myths.

First, we must get past the non-biblical notions that Christianity has absorbed. For one, there was no "immaculate conception" of Mary. That notion arose from the influence of Greek thought forms on the Church. It is contrary to Romans 3:10 and 23. Jesus was the only human moral agent who was without sin.

Also, Mary did not remain a "perpetual virgin." Jesus had four younger brothers and at least two younger sisters. These were not "cousins," for Jesus Himself used the terms "brother" and "sister" in the context of His immediate family (Matthew 12:46-50). Joseph did not have marital relations with Mary *until* Jesus was born (Matthew 1:25).

Mary was not the "Mother of God." When Elizabeth referred to her as "the mother of my Lord" (Luke 1:43), she was speaking of Jesus' humanity, not His deity.

We do not come to Christ through Mary. Jesus invites us, "Come to me" (Matthew 11:28). When the wise men saw Jesus with Mary, they fell down and worshipped Him. When Gabriel appeared to Mary, he "hailed" her. "Hail" meant "happy greetings!" The angel said it once. It is pointless to keep repeating it.

Mary said that all generations would call her blessed (count her happy, blessed of God). So we do. She was blessed of God indeed, and we acknowledge that fact. But there is no point in saying it over and over.

Mary was not taken to Heaven bodily. "The Assumption Of Mary" is a legend that comes to us from the fourth century and was not proclaimed officially until 1950. It has no basis in The Scriptures or the writings of the early church.

Character Qualities.

Mary was highly favored. God was with her. She was chosen to be the mother of Jesus' humanity. This tells us that Mary was a young woman of outstanding moral and spiritual character.

Mary was submissive to God. She counted the cost. So far as she knew: she would lose Joseph; she would be a social outcast; she had no idea how she would raise the Child. Yet she said without hesitation, "May it be to me as you have said" (Luke 1:38).

With thoughts tumbling through her mind and emotions churning inside, Mary arose and raced the many miles from Nazareth to the hills of Judea. She *had* to see Elizabeth!

Mary was a woman of faith. Part of Elizabeth's prophetic response to Mary's greeting was "blessed is she who has believed" (Luke 1:45).

Mary was humble. She spoke of her "humble state" (Luke 1:48). She realized that she was a girl from Nazareth with no social status.

Mary was spiritual. She was a devout worshipper. We see this in the profound and powerful words of the Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55).

Mary was thoughtful. She kept the words of the shepherds and pondered them in her heart (Luke 2:19). Twelve years later in Jerusalem Jesus made a pointed statement about His true Father that Mary kept also in her heart (Luke 2:51).

The Human/Spiritual Distinction.

At times Jesus reminded Mary of the distinction between their human relationship and His divine origin and mission. At the wedding in Cana (John 2) Jesus called her "Woman." This was not in disrespect, but was like addressing her as "Lady." Mary said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you" (John 2:5). That is Mary's only commandment.

Even though Mary knew the true identity of her firstborn, we read about an occasion where she allowed herself to be influenced by Jesus' unbelieving half-brothers (Matthew 12:46-50). As Jesus was teaching, His mother and brothers stood outside and sent word for Him to talk with them. Jesus replied, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" Pointing to His disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother" (Verses 48-50). Jesus' words were a statement that spiritual ties were above their human ties.

On the cross Jesus again addressed His mother as "Woman." "Woman, behold, your son!" Then He said to John, "Behold, your mother!" (John 19:26, 27 NASB). At this point Jesus severed all filial ties with His mother and transferred them to John. During Jesus' ministry Mary began losing Him. Now she had to let go. He who had been her son now belongs only to His Father.

Mary had Jesus during the years of His childhood and early adulthood, and she made the most of them. What a special mother she was! This reminds us of the solemn and priceless opportunity we parents have during the early formative years of our children.

The last time we read of Mary in the Bible, she obeyed the command of Jesus and was in the upper room, waiting for the descent of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:14). On the Day of Pentecost Mary was baptized in the Holy Spirit and spoke with tongues. She was one of the original pentecostals! When she was a young virgin, the Holy Spirit came upon Mary for the unique purpose of accomplishing the miraculous conception of Jesus. But that was not her baptism in the Holy Spirit. That happened in the upper room.

In her Magnificat Mary said, "my spirit rejoices in God my Savior" (Luke 1:47). Yes, Mary needed the Savior; and so do we.