

## WHAT CHILD IS THIS?

### MARY

**Text:** Luke 1:26-35 NLT

**Skit Guys:** *Mary*

Our ongoing Theme for these Christmas messages is – *What Child is This?*

We've looked at the Christmas story through the eyes of shepherds and wise men.

Today we turn our attention to a teenage Mary, selected by Almighty God to: conceive, carry, birth and raise His only Son.

To be chosen by God for such a task is so amazing - we're cautious about taking too close a look at Mary. Most of us have kept our distance, giving respect to her during the Christmas season.

We hesitate to ask the question ... Why Mary? What sets her apart from so many thousands of other women?

Each set of players in this *first Christmas pageant* were chosen and directed by the Holy Spirit to be in the right place at the right moment.

- **The shepherds** sent to Bethlehem – they find Mary and the babe just as the Angel had instructed
- **The Magi:** Wiseman, scholars & astronomers, followed His star half way across the known world seeking, searching for the child Messiah. (2-3 year journey)
- **But Mary is different:** Gabriel, one of God's elite cherubim, is sent to her for a face to face, one on one meeting.

Gabriel is on a first name basis with her; and honors her calling her highly favored one

### Mistakes regarding Mary

1. **Some religious orders** of Christianity- have elevated Mary's position –praying to her and worshiping her as the mother of God- **A mistake**

Mary was an unassuming teenager – caught completely off guard by the Angel's visit

2. **Others** make the mistake of ignoring her, reducing Mary to the role of a surrogate mother, who carried and birthed Jesus.

**Mary was specifically chosen by God.** She did far more than provide the eternal Son of God with a human body

**Mary was closer to Jesus than any other living person. She and Joseph were the two people who help shape the man Jesus was to become.**

[Luke 1:26-35 NLT](#)

### **The Birth of Jesus Foretold**

<sup>26</sup> In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a village in Galilee, <sup>27</sup> to a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of King David. <sup>28</sup> Gabriel appeared to her and said, "Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you!"

<sup>29</sup> Confused and disturbed, Mary tried to think what the angel could mean. <sup>30</sup> "Don't be afraid, Mary," the angel told her, "for you have found favor with God! <sup>31</sup> You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. <sup>32</sup> He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David. <sup>33</sup> And he will reign over Israel forever; his Kingdom will never end!"

<sup>34</sup> Mary asked the angel, "But how can this happen? I am a virgin."

<sup>35</sup> The angel replied, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the baby to be born will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God.

Mary never wavers at the Gabriel's announcement; not like John the Baptist's father, Zachariah did.

[Luke 1: 5- 19](#)

<sup>5</sup> ... there was a Jewish priest named Zechariah. ... *and* his wife, Elizabeth, ... were righteous in God's eyes, careful to obey all of the Lord's commandments and regulations. <sup>7</sup> They had no children because Elizabeth was unable to conceive, and they were both very old.

<sup>11</sup> While Zechariah was in the sanctuary, an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the incense altar. <sup>12</sup> Zechariah was shaken and overwhelmed with fear when he saw him.

<sup>13</sup> But the angel said, "Don't be afraid, Zechariah! God has heard your prayer. Your wife, Elizabeth, will give you a son, and you are to name him John.

He will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even before his birth. <sup>16</sup> And he will turn many Israelites to the Lord their God. <sup>17</sup> He will be a man with the spirit and power of Elijah. He will prepare the people for the coming of the Lord.

<sup>18</sup> Zechariah said to the angel, “How can I be sure this will happen? I’m an old man now, and my wife is also well along in years.” (MSG) *You expect me to believe this?*

Zachariah couldn’t swallow the news, bringing Gabriel’s anger down on him

<sup>19</sup> Then the angel said, “I am Gabriel! I stand in the very presence of God. It was he who sent me to bring you this good news! <sup>20</sup> But now, since you didn’t believe what I said, you will be silent and unable to speak until the child is born. For my words will certainly be fulfilled at the proper time.”

1. Zachariah was a man of exceptional faith –yet he could not believe the message
2. Mary never wavered – which speaks volumes about her
3. Zach and Elizabeth had to overcome old age and barren – but their child would arrive via normal sexual relations.
4. Mary was asked to accept something completely unnatural – spiritual and miraculous and she a special willingness to be able to trust God

Hebrews 11:6 NKJ

<sup>6</sup> But without faith *it is* impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Faith is developmental – incremental – **it’s the mysterious medium that allows us to build a relationship with God**



**A friend I taught with** – that I tried over the years to introduce to Jesus Christ once said to me in exasperation - *I would like to believe but I don’t have any faith.*

And yet the scripture is clear ... *to every person God give a measure of faith* [Romans 12:3](#)

**Long After Gabriel’s announcement** - Mary continued to receive messages from God about her child, as the days, weeks and months passed helping her to understand ... **“Who her child really is?”**

She experienced many, *moments frozen in time*

- With the Shepherds - [Luke 1:19 MSG](#) Mary kept all these things to herself, holding them dear, deep within herself.
- The Magi - [Matt: 2:11 MSG](#) They entered the house and saw the child in the arms of Mary, his mother. Overcome, they kneeled and worshiped him. Then they opened their luggage and presented gifts: gold, frankincense, myrrh.
- **On the day Jesus was circumcised** - [Luke 2:25- 35 MSG](#) Led by the Spirit, he (Simeon) entered the Temple. As the parents of the child Jesus brought him in to carry out the rituals of the Law, Simeon took him into his arms and blessed God:

God, you can now release your servant; release me in peace as you promised. with my own eyes I've seen your salvation;

<sup>33-35</sup> Jesus' father and mother were speechless with surprise at these words.

- **Anna the prophetess** a widow in her nineties who never left the temple area, fasting and praying day and night. – [Luke 2:36-38 MSG](#)

At the very time Simeon was praying, she showed up, broke into an anthem of praise to God, and talked about the child to all who were waiting expectantly for the freeing of Jerusalem.

Gabriel foretold Mary the kind of child she Jesus would be ... but on a daily basis she was reminded that even though He was her son He was also the Son of God ... no ordinary child.

Sometimes the hardest things to recognize, are the ones right in front of us, the things we see everyday

William Penn, a Quaker, was the founder of Pennsylvania, one of the original 13 English colonies

Quakers didn't call themselves Quakers they referred to themselves as Friends? The name wasn't a complementary

Their members in their prayer time were so heavily under the influence of God's Spirit that they would shake or *quake* –

They were Spirit filled believers, pacifists who abhorred all forms of war taking literally the commandment *Thou shall not kill*

They were **persecuted for their beliefs**

- In England, 3 thousand were imprisoned –
- In America, anti Quaker laws were passed in every colony except Rhode Island and in Boston Massachusetts, the seat of American Liberty, several Quakers were hanged.

Quakers were leaders in cause of: Abolition, Prohibition, universal suffrage and yet they were completely misunderstood and persecuted

There were days that she just couldn't figure her son Jesus out

That should give today's parents hope – when they throw up their hands in exasperation

My grandfather Skyler is now 13 ... Oh man...

Can you imagine some of the things Mary witnessed as Jesus grew up?

**“I don't care if you are the son of God – stop standing on that bath water and get into that tub!”**

Read between the lines at the Wedding of Cana (water into wine)

It was Mary who approached her son with the intent of trying to spare the hosts embarrassment because they ran out of wine –

Jesus rebuffs her saying *it's not yet my time*

But Mary completely disregards that statement and issues instructs the attendants ... *This is my son, whatever he tells you to do*

While Mary was teaching Jesus, Jesus was teaching Mary, she was learning just like the rest of us who Jesus really is and in the process learning about herself

God's voice to Mary and to Us

Sometimes God speaks in a booming voice sometimes in a whisper

Mary experienced both so did Elijah the prophet

[1 Kings 19: 11- 14](#) MSG

<sup>11-12</sup> Then he was told, “Go, stand on the mountain at attention before GOD. GOD will pass by.”

A hurricane wind ripped through the mountains and shattered the rocks before GOD, but GOD wasn't to be found in the wind; after the wind an earthquake, but GOD wasn't in the earthquake;

and after the earthquake fire, but GOD wasn't in the fire; and after the fire a gentle and quiet whisper.

<sup>13-14</sup> When Elijah heard the quiet voice, he muffled his face with his great cloak, went to the mouth of the cave, and stood there.

A quiet voice asked, "So Elijah, now tell me, what are you doing here?"

Sometimes God's voice booms to deliver us from paralyzing fear or a moment of utter futility

Sometimes He speaks in a still small voice –to our heart– Peace be still – I'm with you – I'm here

His voice might come during:

- a panic attack
- after you wake up from a terrible nightmare
- You might hear it during a prolonged illness or problem

Maybe His voice is calling to you right now ... a still, small voice, an internal whisper ... *I'm here, trust me*

If you've never opened your heart

If you've never had the answer within you to What Child is This? Let the Holy Spirit Jesus to you right now.

Let's Pray