

MARY, what we should know about her.



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Summary: We talk a lot about the MEN of the Bible. Today I feel inspired to talk about a WOMAN who I believe may well be the greatest woman in the Bible – Mary, the one God Most High *personally* hand-picked to bear and raise his Son. What a calling! What responsibility! But Mary handled it all with grace and humility, and has a lot to teach us, which I cover. Plus I discuss some seriously wrong doctrines and dogmas about Mary that simply are not Biblical. I hope you enjoy and grow from lessons Mary can teach us as we peek into Mary's life.

Hello again, dear brothers and sisters in God's house. Today's message is about Mary, the mother of Jesus – or Yeshua, his Hebrew name, as I call him. We **talk a lot about key MEN** in the Bible.

It's time to also honor *the great women of the Bible*, and Mary has to be one of the greatest. I think those of us who don't observe Christmas, or Sunday worship, shy away from talking about Mary at all, because of implied associations with Christmas and Mary worship. BUT NEITHER should we go the extreme and ignore one of the greatest children of God ever!

I'm Philip Shields, and **welcome to Light on the Rock**. I hope you'll get back in touch with me from time to time about the sermons. Or feel free to write comments on our sermons, but you'll have to register first.

Most Christians know that the mother of our Messiah was a wonderful lady named Mary, "Miriam" in her native Hebrew.

Why talk about Mary? Am I supporting Christmas? Absolutely not. We are deeply appreciative of having a Savior be born in Bethlehem, but he was not born in December, and so many of the Christmas traditions come from pagan worship. I've spoken on that many times. **Just type "Christmas" in the Search Bar** and you'll see. *We can't put Christ back into Christmas, as he's never been in it.*

But whether one keeps Christmas or not, Mary – as the chosen Mother of The Messiah – is a truly impressive figure in Biblical history. **After all, God Most High personally picked her to give birth to and raise his Son!** **We talk about MEN of the Bible quite often. This time, let's focus on this wonderful young lady** and dispel some myths and retell how God used her, from the Bible perspective.

You may be believing some untruths about her without knowing. OR, you may **also be missing out on some wonderful insights about Mary** because perhaps your fellowship never talks about her. SO today, I aim to get the balance on this.

Let's pull away from the extremes about Mary – either venerating and worshiping her and her images – or ignoring her completely! If we just believe what scripture says about her, she comes away surely as one of the greatest persons in all the Bible, ever.

Yeshua said the greatest prophet, in HIS estimation was John the Baptist (Luke 7:28). We know little about either one really, but we find God calling Mary “highly favored”, and John the Baptist being called the “greatest” prophet. I doubt many of us would choose either one of these 2 people naturally as “the greatest”.

Mary and Joseph are certainly on people's minds this time of year. You see the creches put up in people's front yards depicting the birth of Jesus in a manger, with Mary and Joseph and a few animals around. So people are thinking of her. And in the Catholic world, Mary certainly holds preeminence and is even called **“Queen of heaven” by Catholics**. It's not a good term in the Bible though (**Jeremiah 7:18; 44:17-19**) as that **term** refers to **Ishtar**, the goddess of sex and fertility!

But let's not let Catholic error keep us from properly honoring Mary.

I look forward to meeting Mary some day and am sure we all will. The true Mary, I mean. The godly humble woman chosen by God himself.

There are other titles used by many, though these titles are not to be found in scripture, as titles.

- **St. Mary?** *The Bible says anyone who has God's indwelling presence of His Holy Spirit is a saint.* So yes, she was a saint, but so are you – and though scripture calls us “saints”, it doesn't use it as a title.

- **The Virgin Mary.** Yes, she was a virgin, *but didn't stay a virgin*, as I'll show you from scripture. Again, the term "Virgin Mary" *is never used in scripture* though she's described as a virgin. **Ditto for "Holy Family"**. We ALL should have holy families if we have children and we're leading our family by God's spirit. (Church in Barcelona – Sagrada Familia – sacred family, designed by Antoni Gaudi. Where we get "gaudy" from).

We'll also discuss Catholic dogma such as "the Immaculate Conception of Mary," the "Assumption to Heaven of Mary", other descriptions she's given, and other teachings – but initially I want to talk about all the good stuff about Mary, mother of the Messiah.

Note: **When I speak of Jesus, I often say "Yeshua" - - the HEBREW name that Mary was told to call her son.** Your English Bible says "Jesus" – but that sound and name were never even vocalized that way until hundreds of years after his birth. Jews called him **Yeshua, meaning Salvation – from the root "yasha," meaning "to deliver, save and rescue."** So Yeshua means he is the Savior.

Let me be clear as we start:

- **We worship her Son, Yeshua -- his name** in the Hebrew language. **We worship God.** We worship Yeshua the son of God, but not Mary – though we can honor her and respect her. I'll have more later in here.
- **We pray to God our Father in Jesus' name; we should never ever pray to Mary or anyone or anything other than God or God's Son.** We praise and glorify Yeshua, not Mary. There is no scripture indicating we should pray to Mary.

Some scriptural info everyone should know about Mary

- **Mary was a Jew. (Luke 1:32) So was Joseph. So was Jesus (Hebrews 7:14). It's not wise to be a Jew-hater!** Her Hebrew name was **Miriam**. Most of the New Testament was written by Jews who were followers of Yeshua. Most of the early church were Jews.
- **Mary was of the tribe of Judah, and a descendant of King David (Luke 2 ancestry), as was her husband Joseph (Matthew 1 ancestry).** This is important, for **the father of Yeshua was not Joseph, but God himself**, who used the Holy Spirit to beget his son through Mary (**Luke 1:35**). The Holy Spirit was the means – but does not make the Holy Spirit the father of Jesus, any more than a man's seed

makes the seed the father of the child from a union. **Read the account in Luke 1:26-38.**

So through Mary's line (Luke 3:23-28), Yeshua had full blood-line rights to the lineage of David. And of course Joseph was also of the full LEGAL lineage of King David (Mathew 1). And true to form, we find God Almighty using people who were unknown, who were poor but who worshiped and obeyed him.

- **Mary was likely very young by our standards for marriage today, likely a teenager between 15-19 yrs of age,** based on the usual customary age of brides in Yeshua's day.
- Women of her day were not given the same opportunities as men. They were not expected to know the Tanakh or Bible as men would. Yet Mary was different. She clearly learned and knew God's word very, very well.
- Scripture is clear: Romans 3:23 says **ALL mankind, except Yeshua, have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. 'ALL' includes Mary. Mary was a sinner. Mary needed a Savior.** I know you Catholics have a hard time hearing that or saying that, but you either believe scripture, or you believe church tradition that goes against scripture. I was raised in catholic Philippines, and I know how hard this is to swallow, but we ALL have sinned and fallen short of God's glory.
Romans 3:23
 "For **ALL** have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."
- But in spite of needing a Savior like we all do – **God was highly pleased with Mary (Luke 1:30).** Gabriel who stands before God's presence, came to tell her "you have found favor with God." "Favor" is the same word for "**grace**" - #5485 = "**charis**" in the Greek. I'm giving a full sermon or two on true Grace real soon. God was pleased with her. He extended her his grace, his favor, his approval.
- **She was told by the messenger angel Gabriel about her high calling** to give birth to and raise the Son of God as her own. She was betrothed – like a strong engagement – to Joseph. She's told by Gabriel that she would conceive by the power of the Holy Spirit, and *the father of her first son would be God in the Highest (God the Father).* Imagine hearing that! *At this point, Joseph knows nothing about this yet.*
- **Unlike Daniel,** who fainted into deep unconsciousness at meeting Gabriel, *Mary takes it all in stride.* (**Daniel 8:15-18; Luke 1:26-35**).

Mary must know full well what persecution, gossip and even risk to her very life she could now face, once her pregnancy prior to marrying Joseph was known. She would be called a fornicator – and was called that. In spite of that, she obediently and humbly accepted her role.

Luke 1:38

“Then Mary said, ‘Behold the maidservant of the Lord! *Let it be to me according to your word.*’ And the angel departed from her.”

Our Savior DID have to face the accusation that he had been born illegitimately out of wedlock, from fornication.

John 8:41

“You do the deeds of your father.’ Then they said to Him, "**WE were not born of fornication;** we have one Father — God."

- **Mary, from start to finish, was totally submitted to God. Luke 1:38** –so be it, I’m just your servant. I’ll do what I’m told.” She was also a very thoughtful, thinking servant of God. Many times we’re told “she pondered these things in her heart” when something happened (**Luke 2:19, 51**). We should learn these 2 character traits—humble and obedient submission to God’s will even when it imposes severe hardship and heartache on us, and 2nd: to ponder things in our hearts more.
- *Now Mary MAY have told Joseph at this point, but it doesn’t seem like it.* In Luke’s account, Mary immediately left for Judea, in haste, over 100 miles south of Nazareth, to be with her aging cousin Elizabeth, wife of the priest **Zacharias**. **Elizabeth was now 6 months along (Luke 1:36)** in her pregnancy of John the Baptist – per Gabriel’s words.

Luke 1:39-43

Now Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country **with haste**, to a city of Judah, and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth.

41 And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. 42 Then she spoke out with a loud voice and said, "*Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!*"

- **Mary KNEW GOD’S WORD**. In her song of Praise (called **The Magnificat**) before Elizabeth, she quotes at least 15 Old Testament Scriptures. (**Luke 1:46-55**). That was at a time when women were not encouraged at all to study the scrolls – but to leave all that to the men

folk. Brothers and sisters, *women* have to know God's word too. MANY of you do. I enjoy so much my Bible talks with Carole. She is engrossed in Bible study.

Mary's song of praise in front of Elizabeth, ***mother of John the Baptist, was pure scripture***. Wow, did this young woman, likely still a teenager, *ever know her Bible!* Her Song of praise is so revealing of how she views her relationship with the Almighty.

Please read **Luke 1:46-55** for your own edification. Mary here is simply amazing. Just amazing. ***Oh that we could speak, praise, and sing and pray like Mary could. Every word, every line of her prayer is a direct quote of various scriptures!*** And this was at a time when women were not given the same opportunity as men to learn or read scripture!

- **Mary apparently stayed with Elizabeth for 3 more months before returning to Nazareth and Joseph (Luke 1:56)**. This means Mary was now 3 months pregnant – and this *seems* to be the first time Joseph learned of Mary's pregnancy. **This may be news to some of you. Merge now the account from Matthew 1 and Luke 1.**

Joseph obviously doesn't believe Mary's story, so he is thinking of ways to break the engagement without humiliating her, but an angel told him in a dream to take her as his wife. He does so, but has no sexual relations with her, *till their firstborn baby*, the Son of God, is born (**Matt.1:25**).

Yes, a true virgin conceived and gave birth to one who was Immanuel – meaning "GOD with us" (**Isaiah 7:14**).

Matthew 1:18-20

"Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, *before they came together*, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. [*Matthew skips the whole account of Mary's trip to see Elizabeth*]

19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. 20 But while he thought about these things, behold, **an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream**, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit".

Matthew 1:24-25

“**Then Joseph**, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, 25 but **did not know her till** she had brought forth her **firstborn** Son. And he called His name Jesus.”

Notice the wording again: UNTIL she had her FIRSTBORN...

Mary had a very fine husband, full of kindness.

- **Mary and Joseph were POOR and had a difficult life. Here in her 9th month of pregnancy she’s having to walk or ride a donkey for 100 miles to register in Bethlehem and give birth to the son of God, but the world has no room for them in the inn. (Luke 2:1-20).**

So they had to find a place and the baby ended up in a food trough, a manger. See my blog about where exactly Christ was born. Imagine all that as the starting day for the coming King of kings, the Son of GOD, here on earth.

Were they poor? Yes – they offered 2 turtledoves, an allowable sacrifice for poor people who couldn’t afford a lamb or sheep (**Luke 2:22-24; Leviticus 12:8**).

- **Then, while Yeshua was a toddler, they had to flee from Bethlehem to EGYPT to avoid being killed by Herod.** Imagine the stress of all that on a new young mother. See **Matthew 2**. They may have been in Egypt for a few years.

- **Mary shows us what to do when we are faced with a problem** – like the wedding feast in Cana (**John 2**), running out of wine. First thing she did: check with Jesus (**John 2:3-4**) and then in total faith, told the servants to do whatever He told them to do. (**John 2:5**). The six containers for purification, containing 20-30 gallons of water each was all turned into finest wine. **It was just before the Passover season (John 2:13)**. It foreshadowed the blood of Christ, enough for everyone.
- Mary is clearly shown as one who worshipped her Son Yeshua, and never as an object of worship herself. She is listed as among those who had gathered to pray after the resurrection, in the Upper Room (**Acts 1:14**). Mary is never mentioned again by name in the Bible after that. It must have been dangerous to be the mother of Jesus/Yeshua.

Now let's go deeper on some teachings about Mary that are NOT true, according to scripture.

“The Immaculate Conception of Mary” – is it in the Bible?

We all know that **Yeshua** never had any sin. But this doctrine says Mary, the mother of Yeshua, was herself conceived immaculately, without any stain of sin then or, it seems, ever. Many believe she was forever sinless.

Romans 3:23 – **“For ALL have sinned** and fall short of the glory of God.”.

The Catholic teaching of **Mary’s “immaculate conception”** is never mentioned or hinted at *in Scripture*. **In fact, it did not even become official teaching of the Catholic church until 1854 when Pope Pius IX** gave it the status of dogma. Before that, it was highly controversial among church scholars. I believe most Catholics also believe that Mary never ever sinned. That simply goes against Romans 3:23.

The Catholic teaching of **“Original sin”** is part of their understanding of this. *I don't like the term “original sin”, and that term is never used in scripture.* But something did happen to all mankind when Adam knowingly sinned.

Some sabbath church groups deny that we all come under Adam's curse, cut off from God initially, and with a tendency to sin. Let's read it, focusing on Adam's sin:

Romans 5:12-13

“Therefore, just as **through ONE man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to ALL men, because all sinned** — 13 (For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law.”

Verses 14-15 goes on to explain that Paul is not saying we all sinned the same sin as Adam, but we all are under the same curse until we receive God's call to come back to HIM, as our God, our Father, and king, and be his children and accept that high calling, repent and receive his Holy Spirit.

Romans 5:18-19 (Contrasts the results of the lives of Adam and Christ)

“Therefore, **as through ONE man's offense JUDGMENT came to ALL men, resulting in condemnation,** even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life.

19 For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners,
so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous.”

That's clear, isn't it? So Mary was NOT immaculately conceived, nor did she live a sinless life the rest of her life after conception!

No, we've all sinned and – there is absolutely NOTHING in scripture that even hints that Mary was sinless or given exception to the rule that all mankind was a part of the original curse of Adam. *We're all born with a carnal nature that is inclined to sin and all humans therefore needed a Savior.*

I personally do not like the term “original sin”, a Catholic teaching, but we all do come into the world cut off from God, with a proclivity to sin, as part of the curse on Adam as Romans 5 explains. We were all “in” Adam and Eve when they were kicked out of the Garden of Eden. Now God calls those He is offering the blessing of being able to come to God, be forgiven, reconciled to him.

For many Catholics, it would be a hard statement to repeat or believe: “Mary was born in sin”. Remember David said, ‘in sin did my mother conceive me’ (**Psalm 51:5**) –because we all come under the curse of being separated from God, and with a proclivity to sin, because of Adam’s sin and expulsion from God’s presence. David said he was conceived in sin.

Think about this: the only one who would be and could be exempt from “original sin” concept in my view was Jesus the Christ himself. Anyone born from the male lines of Adam through his own father would fall under the Adamic curse and need a Savior. But not Jesus! Jesus WAS and IS and could be the Savior *because* HIS Father was Holy Father in heaven, perfectly righteous Almighty GOD (**Luke 1:35**). So *Yeshua/Jesus was not born as part of the Adamic curse and separation from God and is able therefore to be the Savior. Plus, his one life – being God made flesh (John 1:14), is worth more than all humans ever created.*

Since Jesus' father was not any human, this could be how Yeshua could say about Satan, “He has NOTHING IN ME” (**John 14:30**).

Hebrews 7:26 says Jesus was “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners....”

1 Peter 1:19 calls Jesus “a lamb without blemish and without spot”.

So Mary was not sinless. However, her humility, obedience, and desire to know God and follow his word and raise His Son truly are remarkable.

Mary did not remain a virgin

Let's continue: **Did you know Mary did not remain a virgin after giving birth to Yeshua, the name she called her first born? Far from it!** Mary mothered a large family of at least 6 children plus Yeshua = at least 7 children to raise. The Bible is so clear that she had at least 4 more sons after Jesus (Yeshua) was born, and at least 2 daughters, making SIX more children. See **Matthew 13:55-56; Mark 6:3; Galatians 1:19**. When the residents of Nazareth saw and heard Yeshua, they couldn't believe this "local guy" who grew up down the street could be all they were seeing. So they said this:

Matthew 13:55-57

"Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas?

56 And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this Man get all these things?"

They paid for their unbelief too though, as Yeshua could do but just a few miracles in his own home town due to their unbelief (**Matt. 13:58; Mark 6:3-6**). How sad.

Matthew 1:24-25 tells us that Joseph "did not know her TILL she had brought forth her FIRSTBORN son. And he called his name Jesus" (Yeshua, in Hebrew).

No need to mention Yeshua was her *firstborn* if there had been no others. And it strongly implies that after Yeshua's birth, **Mary and Joseph had beautiful marital sex, lots of times. See Hebrews 13:4**. I've often thought, after raising perfect Yeshua, she probably often wondered what made the other boys she gave birth to, so different?

At least two of those brothers of Yeshua became key apostles in the early church – James and Jude. James the brother of Yeshua wrote the epistle of James. Jude (Judas) wrote the short epistle of Jude. Both of these men were well known for being students of the Torah and strongly obedient to God's word.

These 2 other sons of Mary –James and Jude -- were so humble. They both could have started their epistles saying, "James (or Jude), the brother of the

Son of God,” but they don’t. James starts his epistle simply as “James, a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ.” **Jude** starts the epistle similarly. “Jude, a slave of Jesus Christ, and brother of James.” The Greek word “duolos” literally means “slave.”

And there’s little doubt that **these 2 other sons of Mary were also martyred. Wow, what Mary suffered**, losing several of her children to painful martyrdom. Imagine her pain. Anyway, Mary had more children.

But Catholic dogma insists – contrary to what we just read -- that Mary somehow remained a virgin, though married to Joseph.

Should we ever Pray to Mary?

Catholics also believe we can and should pray to Mary and that she intercedes for us to her Son Yeshua (Jesus the Christ). Yeshua says we are to worship only God (Matthew 4:10), pray to God (Matt 6:9), and Him alone. We can also pray to the Son of God, who is also “God.” But no one else.

So no – we should never pray to a great woman, or an angel, or a dead saint or anyone else but God, even if those were great people in the faith, waiting for the resurrection

Many of you may even know the Catholic prayer, “Hail Mary.” The song itself is a prayer to Mary. In English, the song/prayer starts, “Hail Mary, full of grace” and “the Lord is with thee... blessed are thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb...” At least those are close quotes to what Gabriel and Elizabeth said.

But later the prayer was expanded with non-Biblical words. Here’s the original 2nd half before it was expanded in the Ave Maria song: “Holy Mary, **mother of God, pray for us** sinners, now and at the hour of our death, Amen.” But Scripture never refers to her as “mother of God” – just mother of Jesus (**(John 2:1,3; Acts 1:14)**).

Yes, Mary was highly favored, or “full of grace” – **But Mary, like all of us, was the recipient and object of God’s grace, not a bubbling source like a fountain from whence grace flowed to others.** Indeed she was blessed among women (**Luke 1:28**), as the angel Gabriel said, but the Bible never depicts her as having *a place among gods and goddesses, such as calling her “the mother of God” or someone to pray to.*

Catholic Church also calls her **the Queen of Heaven**. Please don't go there. Mary would be appalled! Jeremiah warned against this pagan title, and it was offered to Ishtar, goddess of sex and fertility. **Jeremiah 7:17; 44:17-19.**

Then someone took the **music of Schubert** and added the words to **Ave Maria (Hail Mary)** to it, and Ave Maria expands the prayer with repeating the key phrases.

And by the way, **we have ONE mediator now** between God and man. It's not Mary. It's not your parents. It's not beloved saints who have died. Let's read who it is:

1 Timothy 2:5

"For there is one God and ONE Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus,"

La PIETA Sculpture

If you walk into St Peter's Basilica in Rome, one can't miss the beautiful marble sculpture by Michelangelo called **La Pieta** -- of Mary sadly holding her dead son Jesus on her knees after his crucifixion. Google it. But is that truly what happened?

I wonder how many thousands of people assume this happened just because of the statue. We find instead that Jesus was looking out for his mother.

While Yeshua hung on the cross, he instructed John to take Mary home as his own mom. We're told John immediately obeyed to keep her from seeing her son's final agonizing minutes or hour. Mary, one of the several women at the cross, was taken home, away from the cross, to spare her the agony. In scripture, there was no scene as depicted by the La Pieta sculpture by Michelangelo.

John 19:26-27

**"When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold your son!"
27 Then He said to the disciple, "Behold your mother!" **And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home.****

The Assumption of Mary

Another false teaching about Mary is that she was assumed to heaven both body and soul at the end of her life and works now as

our mediator now. The Catholic church does not have a clear teaching if she ever actually died or not. It's called "the Assumption of Mary" – and it's quite the assumption. It's false. It never happened, folks. It's not in the Bible, that's for sure.

Again, nothing at all in scripture says anything about Mary beyond Acts 1:14.

We don't know how Mary died, or where she died, though there are a lot of legends and stories. All we care about is that she surely died in the faith, awaiting her resurrection upon hearing her Son's voice calling her from the dead into brilliant eternal life. **John 5:28-29**

So there's a lot to like about Mary, a LOT -- without going overboard. She had faith and obedience to do whatever Gabriel told her was God's will for her. Her life was full of testing and suffering – but I'm sure she also had many wonderful moments raising the child of God and then at least 6 more children!

Mary was among the 120 gathered on the day of Pentecost. Acts 1:14 says Mary was there in the Upper Room worshipping, right after the ascension of Christ. She was a true believer who loved her Savior and needed her Savior.

It's good that we focused on this woman for a time and give her the honor and respect due her. I consider her one of the greatest people – whether man or woman – in all the Bible. We can learn from her humility, her willingness to accept God's will for her in spite of the tinges of horror it also presented. She and her husband Joseph, a sensitive and wonderful man, certainly did a marvelous job in raising the Son of God and their own other children too.

Closing prayer.