

Mary Craig Ministries, Inc.

Series: "The Kingdom of God"



Mother's Day Message: "Mary, the Mother of Jesus"

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Dr. Mary Craig

Live Tele-service, May 9, 2021

Mary of Nazareth was young, today's teenager. Her life changed radically with an angel visitation from an all-powerful Sovereign God who declared her "highly favored" and chose her to be the mother of Jesus, His only and unique Son.

Mary was of the line of Judah, the royal line through Nathan from Solomon, from David. Life is going along one day at a time. She gets engaged to Joseph, which in Jewish culture meant that she was as good as married. The Law expected her to be a virgin and that once engaged or espoused that there would be no relations with the husband-to-be until the marriage. Otherwise, the man could put the woman away, divorce her as it were, and possibly even bring out a death penalty.

Here's what happened. Luke 1:26-38.

Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored *one*, the Lord is with you; blessed *are* you among women!"

But when she saw *him*, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."

Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?"

And the angel answered and said to her, "*The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God. Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren. For with God nothing will be impossible.*"

Then Mary said, "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her. Luke 1:26-38 NKJV

The astounding thing about Mary here is her response to Gabriel: Behold the handmaid of the Lord: be it unto me according to your word. She leaves the "how" to God and submits.

This occurred months before her intended marriage to Joseph but after the engagement. Pregnancy now meant shame from the society, wagging tongues, and disgrace upon herself and upon Joseph. This took **courageous faith**. She faced false accusations. She had had this fabulous word from an angel telling her how favored she was and then had to bear the shame upon telling her family, Joseph, and the public. What would they call her Son? A bastard? The Law placed a curse upon bastard children to the tenth generation. Bastard children were forbidden entrance into the temple. Deut. 23:2.

Mary left Nazareth to go to her cousin Elizabeth's. **Elizabeth calls Mary blessed for having believed**, after which Mary gives her song of praise. Listen to Luke 1:45-56.

“Blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord.” Luke 1:45 NKJV, Elizabeth

And Mary said:

“My soul magnifies the Lord, And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant; For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed. For He who is mighty has done great things for me, And holy is His name. And His mercy is on those who fear Him from generation to generation.

He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He has put down the mighty from their thrones, And exalted the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, And the rich He has sent away empty. He has helped His servant Israel, In remembrance of His mercy, As He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed forever.” Luke 1:45-55 NKJV Song of Mary

It is Mary's faith that makes her blessed. She is blessed for having believed. She surrendered in submission to the Word. Mary was “highly favored,” meaning great grace was upon her. There will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord.

Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit Mary speaks. Mary receives revelation that her Son will be great and become the Davidic king to establish a new kind of Davidic dynasty in Jerusalem, a kingdom that will last forever. In this song she is mindful of her humble state and is thankful that God has also been so mindful. She announces that justice has finally arrived, that powers are being subverted.

In a Herod world, did Mary think about the fulfillment of her words bringing about the fall of Herod the Great and the Herodian dynasty? We don't know. Certainly though, this Jesus would bring down rulers from their thrones and lift up the humble. He would fill the hungry with good things and send the rich away empty. He would remember to be merciful to Abraham and to his descendants and fulfill His covenant promises. In a Herod world, the Jews had suffered heavy taxation, a flaunting of the Law, and pagan shrines everywhere.

So **Mary had courage**. She saw herself as the servant girl of God, the handmaid of the Lord.

Mary's God was going to invade the Land to strip away injustice and restore God's people to mercy, peace, and justice. Mary's God is the Mighty One. His Name is Holy. His mercy extends to those who fear Him. He performs mighty deeds. He helps Israel. He remembers to

be merciful. In her Son, Mary puts all this in the past perfect tense! It is done before it begins. Isaiah 11 is about to be fulfilled.

The real Mary was a **dangerous** woman. Her believing, her willingness to carry this Child Jesus, her claims for her Son threatened not only the fabric of Jewish society and the Roman Empire, but the whole world system. She was alive with eyes aglow. She had a dazzling hope for justice and solid confidence in God. She knew God was about to turn the world upside down or right side up and she was pondering all of this in her heart. She knew her Son would counter the gospel of Rome.

The gospel of Rome said that Augustus was the “son of god.” Caesar Augustus, son of god, our savior, has brought peace to the whole world. That was the gospel of Rome. It spread throughout the Roman Empire as “good news.”

Gabriel swooshed into Mary’s life to declare that “**the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.**” The angel said to the shepherds at Jesus’ birth that this birth was “good news of great joy.” They were told, “***Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, Which is Christ the Lord.***” ***Luke 2:10, 11***

They sang “**Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom His favor rests.**”

Mary began to tell the story that becomes our Gospel. The real Mary is a voice behind the Gospels, a dangerous voice as she had occasion and the courage to speak. Mary ran off to tell Elizabeth. She had already told Joseph.

Mary was a witness. She saw and experienced the birth of Jesus. She knew that Jesus is the Child of the Holy Ghost. Jesus was “born of a woman, born under the Law.” Jesus had a real body, God come in human flesh. God prepared Mary and Joseph. God provided for them. God protected them. Nothing and no one can stop the gospel of Jesus Christ and the purposes of the Living God.

Before anything else, we must come to understand that by means of a virginal conception the pre-existent Word (logos) became flesh. (**John 1:14**) This was the means by which God became man. God became man with us without uniting the Son of God to a second (human) person, by means of natural generation. In this miraculous way, God the Son, without ceasing to be what He was and is, the eternal Son and Word of God, took into union with His divine nature in the one divine Person of the Son our human nature. Jesus was a divine person with a divine nature who took to Himself a human nature in a human body; fully God, fully Man. He is “with us,” “Immanuel.” **The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. John 1:14**

So, **when the time was fully come, i.e., in God’s appointed time, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under law. (Galatians 4:4)** The Messiah and Mediator of the covenant of grace appeared on earth when the Jewish diaspora had spread throughout the Roman Empire, when the OT had been translated into Greek, when the *pax Romana* extended over most of the known world, when great roads and the Greek language linked peoples and places, and when Greek philosophical thought had shrunk into skepticism, offering little hope in human wisdom (**1 Corinthians 1:19-21**). The whole world stood in need of a Savior.

Many today want to think of Jesus as the son of Mary. They want to think of Mary as the mother of God, as if Mary produced a divine being in contrast to Eve, the mother of all living. Yet this is

to pervert and diminish the truth and nullify the efficacy of the atonement. Jesus is God, the God-Man. He existed eternally, saying, **before Abraham was, I AM**. And God the Son took on a human nature in a human body so we could behold the glory and lay hold of the grace offered to us in the gospel announced to us by angels. Jesus is the only Mediator between God and humanity.

Mary, a woman of sorrows. Here she is with exalted promises and yet she comes to the Temple to be restored to Temple worship and social relations, impoverished. But then, Simeon comes up and prophesies. Simeon had been waiting for the Consolation of Israel. He was led by the Holy Spirit. (Luke 2:25-35)

And Joseph and His mother marveled at those things which were spoken of Him. Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, "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." Luke 2:33-35 NKJV

Right here begins the process of correcting the prevailing vision of the Messiah's kingdom. The Davidic dynasty would be different from the current view held by Jews. The prevailing view of the kingdom was traditional and triumphal. Jesus' victory, however, would not come through some military victory, but through death on a cross. Jesus' kingdom is "not of this world."

What Mary heard from Simeon must have stunned her. A "sword" would pierce her soul. Jesus would later say, **"Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to turn a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law—your enemies will be the members of your own household."** Matthew 10.

Jesus will be King. As King He will judge the nation. Jesus will be rejected. Mary will suffer too, not in a redemptive way as savior, but as a mother--pondering.

Passover is about liberation. At age 12, Jesus became a "son of the Law." The caravan was heading back from Jerusalem and after 3 days the parents realized Jesus is not among them. They returned to Jerusalem to find Jesus sitting among teachers in the Temple courts, asking questions and providing answers. Mary blurts out, **"Why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you."** Luke 2:48-52

Jesus rebukes Mary for worry and for being anxious. He then wonders why they were searching for Him. How come they didn't know that He had to be in His Father's house? Jesus knows; He was telling Mary that God was uniquely His Father. He was well aware of that. And He was telling Mary that His relationship to her as mother was subordinate to His relationship to God as Father.

Jesus wasn't there as a student listening. He was in the posture of teacher and the leaders were listening to Him, at age 12. Now there was a common Jewish expectation that the messianic king come to liberate Israel from its enemies would be filled with God's Spirit and wisdom. Jesus had been dedicated to His Father and now His mission was to serve His Father. This was His Father's house. Jesus' house would not be the "house" of Mary and Joseph, but the household of God; and the center of that new household is Jesus. It was going to be a new kind of family, the kingdom of God.

In Judaism to honor one's father and mother meant to display respect for them in private and public places. Children were expected to secure their freedom from their parents in a way that

did not humiliate them or impoverish them. In Mary's world sons and daughters were to honor their parents by providing for them. Jesus let His parents know, when He answered Mary, that the first commandment took precedence over the fifth commandment. Jesus did, however, return with His parents to Nazareth and was obedient to them, fulfilling the Law in our place and stead.

Jesus was sent by His Father. A Body had been prepared for Him. He had come to do His Father's will. He will only do the will of the Father. Jesus honors the Father and to honor the Father someone must honor the Son.

Mary had to let Jesus do what His Father sent Him to do when the Father wanted it done, how the Father wanted it done, and for the purposes the Father wanted it done. At the wedding at Cana, when Mary presents a problem, Jesus says to her, "My hour has not yet come." That "hour" refers to the time when Jesus would be crucified. Everything had to be done in the Father's will and according to the Father's timetable. For anyone to know God's will, Jesus had to reveal that will.

Mary had to surrender her honor to Jesus' honor as Jesus honored the Father. Mary had to allow Jesus to become her Lord. At the wedding at Cana, Mary says, "Do whatever He tells you." These are the last words Mary spoke that we have recorded in Scripture.

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For with God nothing shall be impossible. Gabriel, Luke 1:37

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