

The Life of Christ
Mary, The Mother of Jesus

Introduction:

Can you imagine all that happened to this young lady?!? All that transpired in her life before must have paled in comparison to what God had in store for her next. Mary was certainly a young lady that possessed many great qualities. Because of these qualities, she became betrothed to a man named Joseph. The term “betrothed” means *promised to* or, in our modern terminology, *engaged*. As any young lady would be, Mary was busy preparing herself and her surroundings for the upcoming ceremony to which all young ladies look forward. Surely, most of her life had been spent dreaming of this grand day and she must have anticipated its arrival! It was during this time in young Mary’s life that an angel appeared to her. The appearance of this angel frightened her. He told her that she had been selected by God to bear the “seed of woman” that was mentioned in Genesis 3:15. As a child, she most certainly heard that God had promised a Messiah to come, but she questioned how this could occur through her. The angel explained in Luke 1:35, that the Holy Ghost would Father the Child, Who would be called Jesus. Though in awe and confused, Mary accepted this new role that God had placed on her. We have heard how she was ridiculed. We have also heard how she was accepted by Joseph and how she endured the grueling trip from Nazareth to Bethlehem at 8-months pregnant, willingly and then gave birth to our Saviour. There are many reasons why God chose her to accomplish this great task, as we see in the description of her by God coupled with her actions recorded in the Bible of her life before and after the birth of Jesus.

I. Mary sought wisdom

Mary, though young, was a very wise woman. Just after she was informed that she was going to bear the Messiah, she left her home in Nazareth and went to visit her cousin, Elisabeth, in Judah. Elisabeth was an older woman whose husband was a Priest who performed his duty for God (Luke 1:7-9). Elisabeth, upon hearing Mary’s salutation or *greeting*, felt the baby that she was carrying (John the Baptist) leap inside of her womb and she began testifying. Mary was encouraged through the words of her older cousin to bear up the load that God had placed upon her. Mary’s response to Elisabeth’s encouraging words is recorded in Luke 1:46-55. Luke 1:56 tells us that Mary stayed with her elder cousin for 3 months in order to learn from this godly woman. We, today, should apply this principle to our lives and seek the counsel of elderly, godly people as we make the many decisions and face the situations that affect us greatly.

II. Mary followed her husband

Mary must have learned from her cousin the art of following the leader that God had placed over her. In Luke 2:4-5, Mary followed Joseph to Bethlehem from Nazareth (about 100 miles) while almost 9 months pregnant because he was obeying the laws of the land. Then, she followed Joseph in to Egypt to flee the murderous hand of wicked King Herod (Matthew 2:13-15). After the death of Herod, she, again, followed Joseph, who was instructed to go back to

Israel (Matthew 2:19-21). Then, Mary followed Joseph as God directed him to stop in Galilee and the city of Nazareth because Herod's son still reigned. All of the moves that were made before the birth of Christ and soon after His birth were the fulfilling of prophecy. If Mary would not have followed her husband (the God-given authority in her life) as God directed him, the prophecies of the Old Testament may not have been properly fulfilled. God sets up the authorities in our lives and we need to follow them! In following them as they follow God, we can and *will* be directed by God!

III. Mary followed Jesus

How difficult it must have been for this lady to follow the Child to Whom she had given birth! She had been with Him as a helpless Babe and all throughout the time until He became a Man. Even though she knew from the beginning Who He was, at some point during this time she had to decide to *follow* this One that she had *lead* through life. Most Bible scholars believe that sometime during Jesus' teen years or in His early adulthood, Joseph probably passed away. There is no mention of him after the story of Jesus at age 12 in the Temple. Mary, though, is mentioned again. In Matthew 12:46-49, Mary and some of her children showed up to see Jesus as He taught and, when it was pointed out to Him that they were there, He questioned who His mother and brethren were. We see her again in the Bible at the cross as Jesus was dying and Jesus instructed her to allow John to care for her (John 19:26). We also see her in the Upper Room of in Acts 1:14, where she was able to witness the great day of Pentecost and thousands accepted her Son as the Messiah. She had to *personally* accept Jesus as her Messiah, just like everyone else has to, in order to get to Heaven. Upon acceptance of Him, she had to choose to follow Him. We, like Mary did, have to decide to make the choice for ourselves to accept Jesus as our Saviour and then to follow Him with our lives.

Conclusion:

Mary, unlike many religions attempt to teach, was simply a lady willing to be used by God. Her willingness to follow God by following her husband taught and continue to teach us to follow the God-given authority in our own life. Her choice to accept Jesus teaches us salvation and that a personal walk with God is the choice of each individual person. Imagine how Mary must feel as she looks down from Heaven to see how some religions are covering up the Saviour by using Mary and her likeness. What a tragedy! We should learn from her life how to become God's chosen vessel.