

## MARY THE MOTHER OF JESUS

**Mary in the Bible:** The name Mary appears in the Synoptic Gospels and in the book of Acts of the Apostles. Luke contains the most references to Mary with the greatest emphasis in her role in God's plan. Mary is mentioned by name in the genealogy of Jesus, in the annunciation, in Mary's visit with Elizabeth, in the birth of Jesus, in the visit of the wise men, in Jesus' presentation in the temple, and in the Nazarene's rejection of Jesus. In Acts, she is referred to as (Acts 1:14) "Mary, the mother of Jesus" where she participates in the community of believers and prays with the apostles. The Gospel of John never mentions Mary by name, but refers to the "mother of Jesus" in the account of the wedding at Cana and standing near the cross at the crucifixion.

**The call of Mary:** Fearful and troubled, Mary found herself in the presence of the angel Gabriel listening to his announcement. She could never have expected to hear the most absurd news that she would have a child, and her son would be the messiah. Although she could not comprehend how she would conceive the Savior, she responded to God with humble belief and obedience. Although Mary's calling held great honor, it would demand great suffering too. There would be pain in childbirth and motherhood, as well as in the privilege of being the mother of the Messiah.

**Mary's strength:** We read in Luke 1:28 that she was favored one, it simply meant that Mary had been given much grace or unmerited favor from God. Even with God's favor, Mary would still suffer much. Although she would be highly honored as the mother of the Savior, she would first know disgrace as an unwed mother. She nearly lost her fiancé. Her beloved son was rejected and cruelly murdered. Mary's submission to God's plan would cost her dearly, yet she was willing to be God's servant.

God knew that Mary was a woman of rare strength. She was the only human being to be with Jesus throughout his entire life from birth until death. She gave birth to Jesus as her baby and watched him die as her Savior. Mary also knew the Scriptures. When the angel appeared and told her the baby would be God's son Mary replied, "I am the Lord's servant may it be to me as you have said." She knew of the Old Testament prophecies about the coming Messiah.

**Mary's weaknesses:** Mary was young, poor and female. These qualities made her unsuitable in the eyes of her people to be used mightily of God. But God saw Mary's trust and obedience. He knew she would willingly serve God in one of the most important callings ever given to a human being. God looks at our obedience and trust typically not the qualifications that humans consider important. God will often use the most unlikely candidates to serve him.

**Life's lesson:** Mary was willing to submit her life to God's plan no matter what it would cost her. Obedience to the Lord's will mean Mary would be disgraced as an unwed mother. Surely she might have had expected Joseph to divorce her, or worse yet, he might even have her put to death by stoning. She may not have imagined the pain of watching her beloved child bear the weight of sin and die a terrible death on the cross. But surely she knew that her life would hold many sacrifices as the mother of the Messiah. Being chosen by God for a high calling requires total commitment and a willingness to sacrifice everything out of love and devotion to one's Savior.

**Questions to ponder upon:** Am I like Mary, willing to accept God's plan no matter the cost? Can I go a step further and rejoice in that plan as Mary did, knowing it will cost me dearly.