

Mary

Christmas Through Your Eyes--part 1

Dec. 4, 2016

DAY 1: The identity of the baby to be born, Jesus

1. Let's take a look at how Mary found out she was pregnant.

Luke 1:26 In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee,

²⁷ to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary.

²⁸ The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

²⁹ Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be.

³⁰ But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God.

³¹ You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus.

³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David,

³³ and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

2. Mary was betrothed to Joseph. Betrothal meant that the man and woman were considered legally married, even though the marriage ceremony (huppah) and consummation did not occur until as much as a year later. Mary became pregnant during the betrothal period, which would normally bring immense shame on her, Joseph and their families.

3. What are at least five things we learn about the identity of the son to be born to Mary?

4. Which attribute about Jesus strikes you the most?

DAY 2: Verification of the identity of the baby; the Virgin Birth

1. Yesterday, we looked at Gabriel's announcement to Mary with particular interest on the identity of the child to be born. Today, let's personalize this. Try to put yourself in Mary's shoes as what we read yesterday is happening.

Luke 1:26 In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee,

²⁷ to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary.

²⁸ The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

²⁹ Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be.

³⁰ But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God.

³¹ You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus.

³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David,

³³ and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

2. I have never met an angel, especially the angel Gabriel. What would you have thought and felt if the angel Gabriel appeared to you?

3. Luke 1:27 gives us Mary's current "status" at the time of this message. If you were Mary, how would the announcement of a coming baby have struck you?

4. The message Gabriel gave to Mary was the most unique message ever given! How would you have responded to each of these pieces of news:

a. Becoming an "unwed mother" in that culture?

b. The identity of the baby to be born?

DAY 3: Verifying Gabriel's message

1. It's one thing to have an experience like that! It's another thing to verify that experience! The historical events that follow Gabriel's visitation and message verify every detail of his message.

a. Can the lineage of Jesus be traced back to King David, a span of time of about one thousand years? Yes. Both Matthew and Luke record this. (Matthew 1:1-16; Luke 3:23-38)

b. In the long run, will this baby to be called Jesus grow up to fulfill the promises Gabriel makes to Mary?

2. Let's pick up where we left off yesterday.

Luke 1:34 "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

3. The virgin birth is an important doctrine in the Christian faith. Of course, Mary would have no way of knowing just how important the virgin birth would be. But she is curious about how a baby can be born without a human father.

Luke 1:35 The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God."

4. You might wonder if the high claims as to the identity of the baby to be born were a fabrication of Mary's, or if the angel Gabriel really visited Mary and spoke truth to her. There is a simple test. Would she become pregnant? If she became pregnant without any male partner, this would certainly confirm the rest of the message regarding the identity of the baby.

5. Gabriel adds another verifiable proof for Mary and for us...

Luke 1:36 "Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. ³⁷ For nothing is impossible with God."

6. Consider these facts. Elizabeth was past the age of bearing children. She had been barren. Gabriel said that Elizabeth was presently six months pregnant. The idea of Elizabeth becoming pregnant was so preposterous that Gabriel gives the only logical explanation in Luke 1:37.

7. If you had been Mary, what response would you have had to Luke 1:37?

Luke 1:38 "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said." Then the angel left her.

8. What strikes you about her response?

9. Jot down your thoughts as to how you respond to the Lord:

DAY 4: Mary's Song

1. Today and tomorrow we'll look at what is known as "Mary's Song."
2. After the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary, Mary took a trip to visit her cousin, Elizabeth. Through some unique situations, a prophetic word about the of Mary's baby, and the identity of her baby was confirmed, independent of her.

3. Later, Mary prayed this prayer of praise, known to all of us as "Mary's Song."

Luke 1:46 And Mary said: "My soul glorifies the Lord

⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

⁴⁸ for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed,

⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me-- holy is his name.

4. When Mary uses the terms "soul" and "spirit" she is talking about the deepest parts of her being. What is going on in the deepest parts of her being?

5. What is the cause of her deepest joy?

6. In spite of circumstances that may be considered publicly humiliating, she sees the hand of God in these unique circumstances.

- a. What does she realize about the situation?

- b. What does she realize about her God, moving in these circumstances?

7. How does Mary's response to the confusing situation challenge you to trust God in your life?

DAY 5: Mary's Song—part 2:

1. Yesterday we looked at Mary's wonderment at how personal God was, moving in her behalf!

2. As we look at the next part of "Mary's Song" the focus is on God's great work on a worldwide basis.

Luke 1:50 His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation.

⁵¹ *He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.*

⁵² *He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble.*

⁵³ *He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty.*

⁵⁴ *He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful*

⁵⁵ *to Abraham and his descendants forever, even as he said to our fathers."*

3. For each of the verses, jot down what moves Mary about God's work and moving in the world.

Luke 1:50 His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation.

⁵¹ *He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.*

⁵² *He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble.*

⁵³ *He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty.*

⁵⁴ *He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful*

⁵⁵ *to Abraham and his descendants forever, even as he said to our fathers."*

4. What strikes you most about God in Mary's Song?