

## **“Mother Mary”**

### **Luke 1:26-38**

When you are blessed with a wife and children, you may be like me, when they say to you throughout the year, “You can buy me this and it will be my birthday present” or, “You can buy me this and it will be my Christmas present”.

Sometimes you say “No” and sometimes you say “Yes”. But by the time their birthday or Christmas arrives, they can’t remember, and I can’t remember what it was that I bought them, so they get another present anyway. There is one gift we don’t forget.

The most perfect love gift ever given was the gift God gave at Christmas – the gift of His Son. To help us appreciate that gift, think for a moment of the Nativity scenes you have probably seen all around at Christmas. They usually feature shepherds and Wise Men and perhaps a few barnyard animals. But at the center of the scene we always see Mary, Joseph, and the infant Jesus lying in a manger.

I’d like to use that scene to describe to you the love that motivated the giving of this little boy.

#### **THE STABLE IN BETHLEHEM**

#### **TELLS US OF THE LOVE OF GOD**

Lk 2:1 In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world.<sup>2</sup> (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.)<sup>3</sup> And everyone went to his own town to register.<sup>4</sup> So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David.

<sup>5</sup> He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. <sup>6</sup> While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, <sup>7</sup> and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

One of the central features to the Christmas story is the Jesus was born to an unwed couple in a stable in a town called Bethlehem. This was a scene loaded with tension and pregnant with truth!

Let's think of the tension in that stable that night. First of all, Joseph and Mary were betrothed but not yet married – and yet Mary was pregnant. We are told in the Gospels that Mary was a virgin and that the child in her womb was the creation of God the Holy Spirit. The infant to be born would be the most unique child in all of history – He would be God and man at once. But who would have believed Mary and Joseph when they tried to explain how she became pregnant? The people in their hometown were undoubtedly shocked and this young couple must have been ostracized from the community for their apparent sin.

The next thing that strikes us as strange is that Jesus was born in Bethlehem. Bethlehem was little more than a suburb of the more significant royal city of Jerusalem. Bethlehem was so small it didn't even have enough inns to accommodate the visitors. Since the child was born to become king of the Jews, it seems he should have been born in Jerusalem, the capital of the nation.

But most shocking of all, why was the child born in a stable? God could have arranged for Him to be born anywhere – like a palace to at least a nice clean home.

What an unlikely place for a king to be born! After a difficult journey for a woman in the ninth month of pregnancy, a stable is the last place that a caring husband would want her to be. The Nativity scenes that decorate the landscape during Christmas season are something less than accurate. None of them smell quite right. We don't fully understand the unsanitary conditions of having to walk carefully around the droppings of animals and then lay down a newborn baby, fresh from the pains of delivery, in a feeding trough streaked with the saliva of animals.

We don't fully understand the embarrassment Joseph must have felt to watch his wife go through this pain in these surroundings. The Son of God deserved something better.

Why then did God choose a stable?

Let's answer some of those questions. First of all, God selected Mary and Joseph because even as a young couple they were spiritually and morally the kind of parents to whom He could entrust the raising of His Son. God selected an unmarried virgin so that the world would always know that Jesus is both God and man.

Secondly, Jesus was born in Bethlehem to fulfill the vow God had made to send the world a king who came from the family line of David. There was an evil, paranoid, non-Jewish king sitting on the throne of Israel at the time who had killed every person who threatened his power – including his own wife and three of his sons. When he heard of the birth of Jesus, he also tried to kill him. Jerusalem was certainly not a safe place for Jesus to be born.

And here's why Jesus was born in a cave to Mother Mary.

- Mary Was A Teen Believer

- Mary Was an Honored Believer
- Mary Was A Courageous Believer

Mary teaches us that we too can be used by God to change the world. We learn from her that . . .

- Faith is not age dependent.
- Faith positions us to be part of the greatest event in all human history.
- Faith means do what God says regardless of the cost.

Luke 1:26... In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary.

#### Mary Had Mature Faith Even as A Teenager!

As we read this story, we are impressed at how mature Mary's faith was at such an early age. Mary was a teenager when the angel appeared to her, perhaps between thirteen and fifteen years of age. The message he brought would change her life in a radical way, but she responded with such strong faith that we have to conclude she had been cultivating it for quite some time. Many of the heroes of the faith in the Bible had a strong faith in God at an early age. Think of . . .

- Samuel. God called him when he was but a young boy and he responded with childlike faith
- David. As a teenager he attributed his success over a lion and a bear to the Lord. He defeated Goliath because rather than fixing his eyes on the giant he saw the greater reality of the presence of the Lord with the Armies of heaven and Israel.

- Daniel was perhaps only 16 when he and his companions were taken into captivity. Yet, despite their youth, they had such a deep faith in the Lord they were willing to face death rather-than-worship false gods. .

Faith is not age-dependent! You don't have to wait until you are old to become a hero of the faith. In fact, age will not guarantee anything at all. Many young people are more mature spiritually than people decades older than them. The book of Ecclesiastes urges us to start following God when we are young (12:1) . . . <sup>1</sup>Remember your creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come, and the years draw near when you will say, "I have no pleasure in them".

Mary Believed in The Personal God of Israel!

The key sentence I want to emphasize here is: “The Lord is with you”. Mary’s faith was not in a creed or a religion. She believed in the Lord God of Israel. Sadly, the same could not be said of most of the religious leaders of Israel at that time. They had a relationship with their religion rather than a relationship with God.

A relationship with the Lord God is what sets Biblical faith apart from the religions of the world. The writer to the Hebrews, in describing faith said: Hebrews 11:6 . . . And without faith it is impossible to please God because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

God is a person (He can be pleased) and faith begins when we believe that He exists and that His basic orientation toward us is to reward us, not punish us.

Hear that again: reward us, not punish us. God is love, and the central command of the Bible is that we should love Him in return.

It is clear that Mary responded to His love and believed in God.

Today, we do the same thing when we believe in Jesus Christ. As this passage will teach us, Jesus is God who became a man. The Bible explains that He did so in order to take the punishment of our sins and to offer us eternal life. Jesus Himself said: John 3:16 . . . “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. <sup>17</sup>For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. <sup>18</sup>Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world.

May the peace of God . . .

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