

San Juan church of Christ

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What Does God's Word Say About... Mary, the Mother of Jesus

The apostle Paul wrote, "But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons" (Gal. 4:4-5). Jesus our Savior, who came into the world as God in the flesh, was brought into this world through a woman; He had a human mother. Out of all the women who have ever lived, only one was chosen to fulfill this great role.

On one occasion during Jesus' earthly ministry, the Bible says, "one of the women in the crowd raised her voice and said to Him [Jesus], 'Blessed is the womb that bore you and the breasts at which You nursed.' But He said, 'On the contrary, blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it'" (Luke 11:27-28). At that time Jesus could easily have instructed His followers to elevate His mother to some special spiritual status, but He indicated that those who believe in His word and were obedient to it were more important than His mother, Mary.

The Roman Catholic Church has attempted to turn Mary into something she never was and was never intended to be. The Catholic Church added to God's word in the 5th century telling disciples to pray to Mary and to hold as a doctrine that she was a perpetual virgin. By the 6th century they elevated Mary to the status of one to be worshiped. The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, which alleges that she was miraculously conceived so that "original sin" would not be passed on to her, was adopted in 1854. And, in 1950 the doctrine of the Assumption of Mary (the idea that she was supernaturally transported into heaven) became an official doctrine. These false teachings about Mary are accepted by millions of people throughout the world.

Mary gives us an example of how to be a good mother with the life she led according to the scriptures. She was a virgin (Luke 1:26-34). The Bible calls Mary a "virgin" when the angel Gabriel appeared to her (verses 26-27). Mary herself stated to Gabriel that she had never had relations with a man to this point in her life (verse 34). Gabriel told her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you" (Luke 1:35). In the gospel of Matthew it says before Mary and Joseph came together (as husband and wife) "she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 1:18).

Mary was a willing servant of God. How did Mary react to this news from Gabriel? "Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word" (Luke 1:38). Mary provided to Christians today an example of how we should serve the Lord. She did not offer a series of excuses and Mary's godly attitude and willingness to serve are seen in her expression of praise to God (Luke 1:46-55).

God chose Mary, a Jewish peasant girl, who was the wife of a carpenter (Matthew 13:35). When it came time for this divinely appointed mother to give birth to the Savior, the best she could do was to lay her newborn Son in a feed trough (Luke 2:7). As ordinary women of her day would tend to do, she went on to have several other children after Jesus was born (Mark 6:3). She was a Jewish mother who kept God's Law. Mary and Joseph circumcised Jesus on the eighth day according to the Law of Moses (Luke 2:21).

She was a mother who witnessed the miracles of Jesus (John 2:1-4). And also her Son's death. She knew what it was to be acquainted with terrible sorrow and tragedy. As Jesus was dying, the Bible says that Mary stood by the cross of Jesus (John 19:25). While on the cross, Jesus loved His mother so much that He instructed the apostle John to take care of her (John 19:26-27).

After Jesus' resurrection from the dead, Mary continued with the disciples of Jesus. Mary was numbered among the disciples of Jesus as He took His place at the right hand of God. There was only one woman God chose to be the mother of Jesus, but the offer to have a relationship with Jesus is open to everyone in the world. When Jesus was speaking to the multitudes, His mother and brothers stood outside, seeking to speak with Him. When one said, "Look, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, seeking to speak with You." But Jesus answered the one who was telling Him this, "Who is My mother and who are My brothers? And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, 'Behold My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother'" (Matthew 12:46-50). Will you take your place in the Lord's family?

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