

Mary: Blessed Among Women

Luke 1:42 - “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb”

Mary: Blessed Among Women

- Mary
 - Hebrew: מרים, Miryam; 18 BC – 41 AD
 - There is significant diversity in the Marian beliefs. The Catholic Church holds distinctive Marian dogmas: the Immaculate Conception, the perpetual virginity of Mary, and the Assumption of Mary into Heaven
 - Protestants minimize Mary's role in Christianity based on the brevity of Biblical references

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- Luke mentions Mary most often, identifying her by name twelve times, all in the infancy narrative (1:27,30,34,38,39,41,46,56; 2:5,16,19,34).
- Matthew mentions her by name five times, four (1:16,18,20; 2:11) in the infancy narrative and only once (13:55) elsewhere
- Mark names her once by name (6:3) and mentions her as Jesus' mother without naming her in 3:31.

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- John's gospel refers to her twice but never mentions her by name.
 - She is first mentioned at the wedding in Cana of Galilee - John 2:1-12.
 - The second reference is standing near the cross, together with Mary Magdalene, and Mary of Clopas, described by John as her sister - John 19:25-26
 - John 2:1-12 is the only text in which the adult Jesus has a conversation with Mary. He does not address her as "Mother" but as "Woman"

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- In the Book of Acts, Mary and the brothers of Jesus are mentioned in the company of the Eleven who are gathered in the upper room after the Ascension.
- This is the last time she is spoken of in scripture.

Her Purity

- First meeting of Mary in Scripture, she is a virgin
 - Luke 1:27 - “to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary.”
- Virgin defined: “One who has never had sexual relations; a pure and chaste person in relation to sexuality”

Her Purity

- She was a betrothed, espoused, engaged, virgin waiting for the final stage of her marriage, the “home-taking”
- By Jewish law she was already considered a wife, for she had been promised to Joseph.

Her Purity

- Joseph is called her husband; she is his wife
 - Matt. 1:19-20 - “Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. 20 But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.”

Her Purity

- The purity of virginity and the honor of marriage are both seen in her
 - Heb. 13:4 - “Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.”

Her Purity

- After the birth of Jesus, she became the wife of Joseph in the complete sense of the term. Contrary to erring doctrines, she was not a perpetual virgin.
 - Matt. 1:25 - “...and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son.”
- When they arrived in Bethlehem prior to Jesus' birth, she was still his betrothed wife
 - Luke 2:5 - “...to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child.”

Her Purity

- After the birth of Jesus, the full husband/wife relationship existed; at least four sons and two daughters were born to them
 - Matt. 13:55-56 - “Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas? 56 And His sisters, are they not all with us?”

Her Place In God's Plan

- Mary was chosen for a special work; to be the mother of the Lord. It was a favor that God bestowed upon her
 - Luke 1:28, 30 - “And having come in, the angel said to her, Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women! 30 Then the angel said to her, Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.”
- This shows her to be a recipient of blessings, not one to whom a person is to pray for her to bestow blessings upon him.

Her Place In God's Plan

- She was blessed among women - Luke 1:28, 42
- One of a woman's greatest earthly blessings is her children - Prov. 31:28-31
- Her firstborn was not only a blessing to her, but to all
 - Luke 11:27-28 - “And it happened, as He spoke these things, that a certain woman from the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, Blessed is the womb that bore You, and the breasts which nursed You! 28 But He said, More than that, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!”

Her Place In God's Plan

- She knew her role was one of subjection. She is never shown in control of or making decisions for Jesus.
 - During the infancy of Jesus, God dealt entirely with Joseph - Matt. 2:13-22
 - When Jesus was twelve and caused her grief by remaining in Jerusalem, she shows a submissive spirit - Luke 2:42-51

Her Place In God's Plan

- At the wedding feast in Cana of Galilee, she makes a limited suggestion
 - John 2:1-12
- Jesus denies her any special favor or place in His kingdom
 - Mark 3:31-35
- The spiritual relationship is greater than the physical relationship
 - Matt. 10:37-38

Her Place In God's Plan

- At His death, Jesus makes provision for her care
 - John 19:26-27 - “When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, Woman, behold your son! 27 Then He said to the disciple, Behold your mother! And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home.”

Her Place In God's Plan

- The last mention of Mary in Scripture is when she is seen with John in Jerusalem
 - Acts 1:14 - “These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.”

Characteristics To Be Imitated

- Her purity and virtue
 - 1John 3:1-3 - “Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. 2 Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. 3 And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.”

Characteristics To Be Imitated

- Her purity and virtue
 - Phil. 4:8-9 - “Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy-- meditate on these things. 9 The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.”

Characteristics To Be Imitated

- Her humble faith - She identified herself as maidservant of the Lord (ASV: handmaid, bondmaid).
- Elizabeth her cousin, who was the mother of John the Baptist, calls her, “she who believed” - Luke 1:45
- She did not always understand, yet she believed
 - Luke 1:34, 38 - “Then Mary said to the angel, How can this be, since I do not know a man? 38 Then Mary said, Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word.”

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- Luke 1:30-33 - “Then the angel said to her, Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. 32 He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. 33 And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.”

Mary: Blessed Among Women

- Let us never be afraid to say “Mary was a great woman.”
- She was favored by God because God knew who she was and what she would become.