

# MARY: TRUST GOD FOR THE IMPOSSIBLE

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Luke 1:26-38

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INTRO.

-- She was ordinary. If you would have paid for your Christmas gift at her cash register, or if she had waited on your table at a restaurant during your Christmas shopping, you would have considered her to be nice but unremarkable. She even had an ordinary name, Mariam. Many of the households in her village had a daughter named in honor of Moses' sister. And she was engaged to a good but also ordinary man, a young carpenter named Joseph.

-- Yes, Mariam - we know her better as Mary - was in almost every way an ordinary person, but she became a central figure in the cast of the most extraordinary, amazing story of all time - the story of the birth of Jesus, the Messiah, the eternal Son of God come in human flesh to become the Savior of the world.

-- The account of how ordinary Mary stepped into the spotlight of God's great drama of redemption is given by Luke in the first chapter of his Gospel.

Luke 1 (p. )

-- This amazing story begins with an amazing announcement.

## I. AN AMAZING ANNOUNCEMENT (VV. 26-28)

-- The story of Jesus' birth is full of angels. It starts with an angel appearing to an elderly priest named Zechariah to tell him that he and his barren wife Elizabeth are going to have a son that they're to name John and that he will be the forerunner of the Messiah. The same angel then appears to Mary and later on to Joseph to announce the birth of Jesus. Angels appear to the shepherds the night Jesus is born. It may have been an angel that led the Wise Men from Herod's palace to the house where they found Jesus. And an angel appeared once again to Joseph to warn him that Herod was seeking to kill Jesus and to take the child and Mary and escape to Egypt.

You might think that angels appear all the time in the Bible, but the truth is that this number of appearances in a brief span of time is very unusual, even in the Bible, and underscores that something of enormous significance is taking place.

-- Some people are troubled about anything supernatural or miraculous in the Bible. Thomas Jefferson was one of those. He rejected those passages in the Bible where something miraculous or supernatural occurred. In fact, Jefferson produced his own "cut and paste" version of the Bible. Using a razor, he literally cut out any verse in the Gospels that mentioned angels or anything else miraculous or supernatural. But you can't take the supernatural and miraculous out of the Bible. The supernatural and the miraculous are inseparably interwoven into the fabric of the Bible and of the Christmas story. If you take the supernatural and miraculous out of the Christmas story, what you have left is not the Gospel. It's a perversion of the Gospel that has been neutered and robbed of wonder and relevance. Without the supernatural and miraculous, the Christmas story is meaningless and not worth the time it takes to read it.

-- Christmas is a story about the supernatural activity of God in this world. The supernatural angel appears in order to announce an amazing assignment.

## II. AN AMAZING ASSIGNMENT (VV. 29-37)

-- The angel tells Mary that God has chosen her for an amazing assignment - to give birth to a son, but not just any son.

### A. AN AMAZING SON

-- Mary will give birth to the most amazing of sons.

1. His name is to be "Jesus" because He is the one who will be the Savior, the only one through whom sins can be forgiven and the way back to the Father will be provided.

2. He will be called the "Son of the Most High" because He is the eternal Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, the one who was with the Father in the beginning and who equally possesses the divine nature.

3. And He is the prophesied descendant of David, the Messiah who will triumph over death and the forces of Hell, will put an end to all evil, and will establish the eternal kingdom of God.

#### B. AN AMAZING BIRTH

-- And this amazing Son will be born in the most amazing of ways. Mary, the engaged but not yet married virgin, will conceive not through the normal sexual manner but through the supernatural activity of God. The Holy Spirit will implant in Mary's womb the greatest mystery in the universe - the eternal Son of God in embryonic human form.

#### C. AN AMAZING CHOICE

-- And God's choice of Mary as the one to give birth to the promised Messiah is also amazing.

How old do you think Mary was when the angel appeared to her? Of course, we don't know for sure, but it's likely that she was somewhere around 13 or 14 years of age. That would have been a typical age for a "woman" to become engaged in that time and culture. She was a young teen who was not yet married and had never reared any children on her own; yet God entrusted to her the care of His Son, the rearing of the One on whom the salvation of the world and the future of all humanity depended.

Now, I taught junior high school one year, and I have to tell you that I would never have chosen a junior high girl for such an assignment. I mean junior high girls go crazy over Justin Bieber for heaven's sake!

But God delights in choosing to use unlikely and even surprising people. One thing we see in the story of Mary is that God uses young people, and that He can use them in amazing ways. In the OT Joseph was just a teen when he was sold into slavery in Egypt, but that was the first step in God's preparing Joseph to preserve the Jewish people. In the NT Timothy was just a young man, possibly a teenager, when he started working with Paul.

-- One reason why God uses young people is that they are often more fully available to be used than are older adults. The older you get, you tend to take on more commitments and responsibilities, and you tend to develop more preconceived ideas that may limit the ways you are available for God to use you.

It's interesting, for example, to compare and contrast the story of Mary with the story of Zechariah that Luke tells in the first part of this chapter. Zechariah was an elderly priest who had no children. But one day, as he was ministering in the Temple in Jerusalem, the angel Gabriel appeared to him and told him that he and his wife Elizabeth were going to have a son and that they were to name him John (we know him as John the Baptist) and that their son would be the forerunner of the Messiah. Now, Zechariah was a mature priest who had devoted his life to studying the Scriptures and to praying for the coming of the Messiah, while Mary was a young teen with little religious experience, training or education. But it was Zechariah who doubted the angel's announcement and Mary who believed it, which brings us to Mary's amazing acceptance.

### III. AN AMAZING ACCEPTANCE (V. 38)

-- Mary knew immediately that submitting to God's plan would involve great hardship and significant risk.

#### A. THE RISKS

1. To begin with, she was risking the loss of her fiancée, Joseph. Unlike engagement in our society, Mary's betrothal to Joseph was legally binding. Her commitment to Joseph was as serious as that of marriage, and any unfaithfulness was equivalent to adultery. Joseph, of course, would know that he wasn't the baby's father and would assume that Mary had been unfaithful with another man.

2. Furthermore, Mary was risking disapproval and rejection not only from Joseph but from her family and entire village. The stigma associated with pregnancy and motherhood outside of marriage is gone in our society (we don't even use the term "illegitimacy" any more to refer to a birth involving unwed parents). But I assure you that the stigma was very real in Mary's culture. Mary was at risk of becoming an outcast, rejected by family and village.

3. More than that, she was possibly risking her very life. Since unfaithfulness during betrothal was considered adultery, Mary could have been subjected to its punishment, which included being stoned to death.

#### B. THE RESPONSE

-- Mary, of course, understood all these risks as soon as she heard the angel's announcement, but she didn't hesitate in making her response. Unlike Moses, she didn't make excuses trying to evade God's call. And unlike Zechariah, she didn't question God's plan. Instead, without hesitation, delay, or objection, she

immediately chose to accept and surrender herself to God's call and design for her life.

"I am the Lord's servant," she replied. "May it be to me according to your word."

## CONCLUSION

The Christmas story is truly an amazing, miraculous story. It's the story of the impossible made possible. To bring about Christmas, God had to do the impossible, many times. He had to make the elderly Abraham and his elderly and barren wife Sarah to become the parents of a son through whom God would raise a great nation. Then God had to deliver that nation from the slavery bonds of Egypt and through the waters of the Red Sea. He had to providentially guide worldwide events for thousands of years and then cause a virgin to conceive and bear a son.

But that's the kind of God we know - the God who specializes in the impossible, the God who makes a way where there is no way.

In fact, "impossible" and "possible" are categories for you and me but not for God.

Jesus says in Matthew 19:26 that "all things are possible with God." And here in Luke 1:37 the angel Gabriel says the same thing. Literally, what Gabriel says is "every word of God cannot not be performed." It's not possible for God to be unable to do everything that He decrees. Everything that God desires and decrees will be done. The only thing that's impossible with God is for Him to fail to keep His word and to fulfill His plans.

I like what A. W. Tozer said, "Anything God has ever done, he can do now. Anything God has ever done anywhere, he can do here. Anything God has ever done for anyone, he can do for you."

Every year Macy's conducts a Christmastime "Believe" campaign. This year their goal is to receive a million Santa letters. For every letter they will donate a dollar to the "Make-a-Wish Foundation" to grant the dreams of children with life-threatening diseases. It's a great endeavor, but it pales compared to God's "believe" campaign. God is ready to do amazing things in our lives. But we must "believe." Like Mary we must take the risk of commitment and surrender to His call. Before Peter could walk on the water, he had to get out of the boat. Before Mary could give birth to the Son of God, she had to say, "I am your servant."