

## Lesson 125

# Jesus' Parents

Mary and Joseph humbly submitted to God's plan.

# Studying God's Word

## Studying God's Word

Don't forget! Review the Optional Supplements and determine where you can use them.

### Introduction

#### Slide #3

Refer to Lesson 124 Theme Poster. Last lesson we saw how God spoke through an angel messenger after the 400 years of silence since the end of the Old Testament.

What was the name of the angel God sent to the priest Zechariah and the virgin Mary? Gabriel.

The angel Gabriel announced the coming messenger to Zechariah and the coming Messiah to Mary. God told Zechariah to name his son John and Mary to name her son Jesus. The arrival of John and Jesus would fulfill the prophecies given hundreds of years earlier through the prophets Isaiah and Malachi.

To start today, we're going to play a quick game called "Guess Who's Leading." One student will go out in the hall while the rest of us sit in a circle. I'll point to someone, who will be the leader. The leader will begin doing different actions, such as clapping, snapping, nodding, humming, winking, or tapping a foot, which everyone else will immediately copy. When the student in the hall comes back into the room, he'll have three tries to guess who's leading. The leader must try to switch motions about every 30 seconds without him knowing. The rest of the class must copy the motions as quickly as possible without staring at the leader. Ready? Let's try it! Choose a volunteer to go out in the hall. Point to a student to lead and have him/her begin doing motions. Call the student in from the hall and give him three tries to guess who's leading. You may play several rounds, choosing different students to be the guessers and leaders.

The key to this game was your immediate obedience to copy what the leader was doing so they wouldn't stand out as the leader to the guesser. As children, you hear about obedience a lot from your parents and teachers, but obedience is just as important for adults!

The people God chose to be the parents of Jesus had to obey God or things would have been very different. We'll see today that both Mary and Joseph had obedient hearts toward God, even when they didn't understand how everything would work out.

### Mary Visits Elizabeth

When we left Mary in the last lesson, she had just received the amazing news that she would be the mother of the long-awaited Messiah. Gabriel also told her that her cousin Elizabeth was six-months pregnant.

Why would the news that Elizabeth was expecting have been surprising to Mary? Elizabeth and Zechariah were old, so it was not naturally possible that they would have children. Elizabeth's pregnancy was a miracle!

Mary responded in obedience to the message from God. She said she was the Lord's servant and for things to be done as God had spoken. Then Mary left her town of Nazareth and traveled to a town in Judah to visit her cousin Elizabeth and her husband Zechariah.

Slide #4

Slide #5

Slide #6

Luke 1:41-45

Let's read Luke 1:41-45 to see what happened when Mary arrived and greeted Elizabeth. Choose readers.

What happened when Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting? Elizabeth's baby (John) leaped in her womb.

Slide #7

Show the Lesson Theme Poster. Elizabeth's baby, John, leaped with joy when he heard the voice of Mary, the mother of the Lord.

Have any of you felt a baby move or kick inside the belly of a lady who is pregnant? Allow answers.

It's exciting to feel a little baby moving around. And we know that babies can hear and respond to voices before they're born, too.

This detail about John shows that unborn babies are fully human and deserve to be protected since they are made in the image of God, just like you and me. It is clear that John, though unborn, was a person who responded to what was happening outside the womb.

What did he do physically? He leaped.

What emotion did he feel? He felt joy.

And spiritually, who caused him to leap when Elizabeth heard the voice of Jesus' mother? The Holy Spirit.

Why is John's reaction important based on the prophecies about him and Jesus? Allow discussion. John's reaction confirms the identity of Jesus as the Savior and John's purpose in preparing the way for him.

Who gave Elizabeth the blessing she spoke about Mary? Look in verse 41. The Holy Spirit.

Pass out the Class Notes.

God the Holy Spirit revealed to Elizabeth that Mary would be the mother of the Messiah. Elizabeth also praised Mary's faith for believing the angel's message.

Slide #8

Let's start the Class Notes. Who will read #1 and tell us what goes in the blank? How was Elizabeth related to Mary? Choose a reader. Cousin. Have students complete #1.

Who will read #2 about what John did as an unborn baby? Choose a reader. Joy. Have students complete #2.

And #3, who will read that? Choose a reader. Mother. Have students complete #3.

Slide #9

Slide #10

Slide #11

Slide #12

Luke 1:46–55

After Elizabeth's blessing, Mary responded with a song of praise. Let's read Mary's song in Luke 1:46–55. Choose readers, or you read the passage and have students follow along in their Bibles.

Mary's song gives us a glimpse into what kind of person she was—and also into the character of God.

What is the first thing Mary said in verse 46? My soul magnifies the Lord.

Magnify: praise

What does "magnify" mean here? Allow guesses.

Slide #13

Magnify is another word for praise, so Mary was praising the Lord. Instead of focusing on her special role as the mother of the Savior, Mary immediately and humbly gave praise to God. She acknowledged the fact that God was greater than her and praised him for that.

Refer to the Attributes of God Poster. Mary mentioned several attributes of God. She talked about his might and strength. Which attribute refers to God's strength and power? Omnipotent.

What attributes are in verses 49–50? Holy and merciful. Choose students to read those definitions from the poster.

Look in verse 53 where it says God has filled the hungry with good things.

Which attribute describes how God gives good gifts to his children?

Gracious.

What do you think Mary was talking about in verses 54–55 when she said God remembered his word to Abraham and his offspring? Allow discussion.

Mary recognized that the birth of her son, Jesus, was the fulfillment of God's promises to Abraham and his descendants. Everything the prophets spoke about the Messiah was about to happen! Mary understood God's faithfulness to keep his promises.

How do you think Mary knew about God's promises to Abraham and his prophecies about the Savior? She knew the Old Testament Scriptures.

Mary knew the Old Testament Scriptures well. In fact, this song of praise reminds us of the psalms. It has references to the books of the law, the

prophets, and the psalms. In addition to her knowledge of the Scriptures, Mary showed humility and obedience to God.

Because of Mary's special position as the mother of Jesus, some people say that she was sinless—perfect like Jesus was. You may want to explain to your students that in Roman Catholic Dogma, this is the teaching of the Immaculate Conception, which says Mary was born without the stain of original sin.

But what does Mary call God in verse 47? Her Savior.

Mary knew that she was a sinner in need of the Savior, just like the rest of us. She was rejoicing because she knew the Savior was coming!

Can you think of other Bible verses that tell us why Mary couldn't be without sin? See if students can quote or use verses such as Romans 3:10 (none is righteous) and Romans 3:23 (all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God). These verses show that no one, except the perfect Son of God, is without sin.

Another false teaching about Mary is that we should pray to her. You may have heard of Roman Catholics reciting Hail Marys or quoting a memorized prayer to her using a set of beads called a rosary.

Why is it wrong for us to pray to Mary? Allow discussion. She is just a sinful human in need of the Savior, like us. God commands us to worship and pray only to him. 1 Timothy 2:5–6 tells us there is one mediator between God and man, and that is Jesus. We can go straight to Jesus—we don't need Mary to be a mediator between God and us. Jesus said he is the only way to eternal life, not Mary.

Through Mary's song, we get a glimpse of her character. She was favored by God and given an extraordinary opportunity to be a part of his plan. She accepted the responsibility with humility and obedience and gave worship and praise to God. We should follow her example of humility and obedience to God.

#### Slide #14

Let's fill in some more Class Notes. Who will read #4 about Mary's song? Choose a reader. Praise. Have students complete #4.

Who will read #5 about God's attributes in Mary's song? Choose a reader. Holiness. Have students complete #5.

And #6, who will read that? Choose a reader. Savior. Have students complete #6.

### **An Angel Visits Joseph**

Now that we've looked at how the Bible portrays Mary, let's take a look at Jesus' earthly father, Joseph. We aren't given much information about Joseph, but we know his occupation. Remind the students that when we talk about Joseph as Jesus' "earthly father," we are not denying the virgin birth but just affirming that Joseph acted as Jesus' father on earth.

What was Joseph's trade? What did he do for work? He was a carpenter.

Scripture tells us Joseph was a carpenter, and the Gospel of Matthew records how he reacted to the news of Mary's pregnancy. Let's turn there to see what else we can learn about Joseph.

Slide #15

Slide #16

Slide #17

Matthew 1:18-23

Who will read Matthew 1:18-23? Choose readers.

What did Joseph plan to do when he found out Mary was pregnant? He was not planning to shame her, but he was going to divorce her.

Joseph thought Mary had been unfaithful to him and the vows of their betrothal, which was a serious engagement period before the official wedding ceremony when they would be together as husband and wife. Instead of getting her in trouble, he decided to divorce her quietly, which was allowed under God's laws given through Moses.

What does Joseph's plan (and verse 19) show us about his character? What kind of man was Joseph? He was just, or righteous. He showed compassion and care for Mary, even though he thought she was unfaithful. He was going to obey the law in a private manner.

But when Joseph was considering divorcing Mary, who did God send to speak to him? An angel appeared to him in a dream.

Slide #18

Show the Lesson Theme Poster. Yes, the angel came to Joseph in a dream. We are not given the angel's name, but many think it may have been Gabriel, the same angel who delivered the messages to Zechariah and Mary.

What message did the angel give? The angel told Joseph to take Mary as his wife. He explained that Mary was pregnant by the Holy Spirit and that the child was to be the Savior.

In verse 20, what did the angel call Joseph? He called him son of David. What did that mean? Joseph was a descendant of King David.

Joseph was a descendant of King David, and God had promised to send his eternal King through the line of David.

What Old Testament verse is quoted in verse 23? You should all know this one! Isaiah 7:14.

Matthew quoted the prophecy from Isaiah 7:14 to show that the Messiah, Jesus, would be born to a virgin (Mary) and that he would be God (Immanuel). Let's say the memory verse together. Quote Isaiah 7:14 together or read it from the Memory Verse Poster.

Joseph acted in faith and obedience when he woke from the dream. He took Mary as his wife, and he called Mary's son Jesus, just as the angel had instructed.

The Bible doesn't tell us much about Joseph. Even when we read this passage, we often don't focus on Joseph's role in these events. We realize that an angel revealed to him that he was to act as the father of Jesus, and we recognize what is said about Jesus. But we often note Joseph's obedience and move on.

Let's take a minute to think about what would have happened if this had turned out differently. What would or wouldn't have happened if Joseph had divorced Mary? Allow discussion. See if students can connect the prophecies that wouldn't have been fulfilled.

If Joseph had divorced Mary, many Old Testament prophecies wouldn't have been fulfilled! For example, if Joseph had divorced Mary, he wouldn't have taken her to Bethlehem for the census. If Mary hadn't gone to Bethlehem for the census, Jesus would not have been born there, and Micah's prophecy (Micah 5:2) would not have been fulfilled. The wise men would have ended up in a different city searching for the newborn King, Jesus would not have been taken to Egypt to escape Herod (disrupting another prophecy in Hosea 11:1), and King Herod wouldn't have killed all the boys under age two in the area of Bethlehem (Jeremiah 31:15).

That's a lot of things that would have gotten messed up if Joseph hadn't obeyed! But God had chosen to use Joseph to bring about the fulfillment of Jesus' birth. God sent an angel to change Joseph's decision about Mary. God had a plan from the beginning, and we can clearly see him guiding people and events to achieve his sovereign purpose.

#### Slide #19

#### Slide #20

Let's finish the Class Notes. Who will read #7 about Joseph's plan? Choose a reader. Divorce. Have students complete #7.

Whom did God send to Joseph for #8? Choose a reader. Angel. Have students complete #8.

And #9, who will read about the angel's command to Joseph? Choose a reader. Wife. Have students complete #9.

And the last one, who will read #10? Choose a reader. Obedience. Have students complete #10.

## **Application**

### Slide #21

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. Today we looked at Jesus' parents and the things they experienced leading up to the birth of Jesus. Mary showed a humble and worshipful spirit in her song of praise to God. She also had a good understanding of the Scriptures and promises of God. When she came to visit Elizabeth, John leaped for joy at the sound of her greeting! Although Mary was given a special responsibility as the mother of Jesus, she recognized that she needed the Savior, too. Joseph was also given a special role to be Jesus' earthly father. God sent an angel to Joseph to let him know what to do, and Joseph responded with obedience. In all these things, we see God controlling events to fulfill his promises.

How can we follow the examples of Mary and Joseph? We should try to be humble, faithful, and obedient, as they were. We should praise God for who he is, as Mary did. We should study the Bible to know more about God and his promises.

If you were to find yourself in a conversation with a Roman Catholic friend about praying to Mary, what could you say? Allow discussion, emphasizing the importance of being kind and respectful. The key points from the lesson include the fact that Mary considered herself a sinner in need of the Savior, and Mary praised God for what was happening, minimizing her role. In her humility and in her response to Elizabeth's exclamation, it is clear that she would not be willing to accept prayer or praise that belongs to God.

Additionally, the Bible makes it clear that there is only one mediator and redeemer, Jesus, and that all others (Mary included) are sinful people in need of the Savior.

## Lesson Review

We encourage you to play a lesson review game.



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