

YOUNG LADY TAKES A BIG RISK

Luke 1:26-38

"You evangelicals don't believe in the virgin!"

Some resort to criticizing Mary, in reaction to Catholic concept of Mary as "mother of God."

Bible never plays down Mary's importance in God's plan.

Whenever we think of the Christmas story, we're reminded of Mary's importance in history.

Mary acknowledged that future generations would call her blessed

—for God had done great things for her (1:48)

Mary was human like us.

She shared the same nature we possess—including sin!

She was covered by God's grace (1:30); She *"found favor [grace] with God"*

Where there's personal merit, we don't need grace (Rom 3:23; 4:1-5)

She referred to her situation as a "humble state" or condition 47-48

She is called "blessed *among* women," not *over* them. 1:42

Mary was chosen to be used in a significant way.

She deserves attention because her life was pleasing to God—as one seeking after God.

Therefore, we ought to ***imitate her example***; **NOT worship her!**

Luke presents **EVIDENCE FROM JESUS' BIRTH THAT JESUS IS MESSIAH**.

The doctor investigated facts personally; he was convinced it was true.

He was convinced of the reality of the virgin birth.

EVIDENCE OF MESSIAH'S ARRIVAL 1-4

Testimony from Gabriel's revelation to Zechariah 1:5-25

God used Zechariah and Elizabeth, and birth of their son, to demonstrate that God was about to do a miraculous work and prepare God's people for Messiah's coming.

[After telling Zechariah what God was about to do,

Gabriel announced to Mary that God had chosen her to be the mother of Messiah.

Testimony from Gabriel's revelation to Mary 1:26-38

GABRIEL'S ARRIVAL 1:26-29

He visited a young woman, engaged to a godly young man

(Mt 1:19 => "*a righteous man*")

She was legally bound to him by a wedding vow 1:27

They were referred to as "husband and wife."

—serious matrimonial commitment—NOT just an engagement.

Divorce wasn't permitted, without adequate cause.

This pledge was as permanent as marriage itself.

It required divorce papers!

This was a trial period—to be sure the woman was pure.

If found unfaithful, she could be stoned to death; or he could divorce her (either quietly, or loudly and scandalously!).

Joseph was sure this was just a formality in Mary's case.

He knew her reputation as a godly woman.

And then, *she ended up pregnant!* How could this be?!!!

He was mightily disturbed.

He wanted to do the right thing, so he decided to quietly divorce her and walk away.

However, Matthew tells us an angel appeared to him also.

The angel's appearance convinced him—a miracle in macho culture!

But Mary was still afraid! This was a strange event!

PROMISE OF MESSIAH'S BIRTH 1:30-35

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SON

First, **Jesus will be named "Savior"** 31

Jesus = Joshua = "Yahweh saves" or "Savior"

Second, he tells her, **Jesus will be great** 32

Third, **Jesus will be called the "Son of the Most High."** 32, 35

Semitic thought: a son was a "carbon copy" of the father; "a chip off the old block!"

"Son of" was used to refer to a father's characteristics: e.g., "*son of wickedness*" (Ps.

89:22), "*sons of disobedience*" (Eph. 2:2), or "*sons of wrath*" (Eph. 2:3)

To call Jesus "Son of God" is to call Him "God."

Jesus will fulfill the promise made to David 32-33; (2 Sam. 7)

God promised David that his heir would sit on his throne to rule over Israel forever!

If we take His name literally (32), then we ought to take the throne promise literally also. They go together.

[Angel concludes message to Mary by explaining how God would bring this about]

The virgin birth of Christ 34-35

Mary understood and believed the *what* of the promise.

She struggled to figure out the *how*.

There's no unbelief here; it's a question of *how* God will do this!

She had never heard of this kind of divine intervention in history.

Virgins didn't just "conceive and bear a child."

If YOUR daughter or girl friend came home with a story like this, you'd be skeptical too! Mary needed to know *how* God would make this work.

It would be a miracle—God would create a child in her womb.

Much as the Spirit formed the world in the beginning.

Joseph wouldn't be the father

(That's why God explains this to him also Matt. 1:18-25)

H.S. would enable her to conceive God's Son

This is NOT a sexual act—between God and Mary.

It happens the same way the Spirit "came upon" the apostles in Acts 2, to enable them to "give birth" to the church.

They were witnesses to what God was doing.

Yet, He worked through them to cause it to happen.

FORERUNNER OF MESSIAH'S BIRTH 1:36-38

John's birth to Elizabeth—known for inability to bear children—is again announced.

In our society we try to be sensitive to pain of people who aren't able to bear children.

In *that* society, a woman's *value* was determined by her ability to bear children.

Elizabeth was known for this. Literally v. 36 says: "*even Elizabeth, . . . who is called 'the sterile one' is going to have a child in her old age!*"

Because "***nothing is impossible with God!***"

In Mary's case, as well as in the authenticating case of Elizabeth, God is able to do *everything* He promised!

Songwriter Oscar Eliason wrote: "**Got any rivers you think are uncrossable? Got any mountains you can't tunnel through?**" He answers: "**God specializes in things thought impossible!**" That's good news, because every Christian eventually faces some obstacles along life's pathway, and walking in God's will doesn't guarantee that the way will be easy. That's why we have to trust God, and move forward by faith.

At entrance to hospital parking lot they've placed an automatic gate to control flow of traffic. It's activated by a sensor in the street near the entrance. As you get near the gate, the arm swings up and you drive through. However, if you stop your car a few yards back, it stays closed. It only opens when you move forward!

The first step toward the immovable obstacle in *our* life demonstrates our faith in God's ability to move the barrier and take us through the hard spots. Abraham moved out, not knowing where He was going. That's faith. His task was to go; God would clear the path.

Mary's case—she had to trust God with her life, her future, even with consequences concerning her boy friend.

Our case too—when we decide to obey God and take a risk!

Notice Mary's attitude: "***I am the Lord's servant***" (= ***His slave***)

She is willing to do *whatever* He wants, no matter what it may cost her!

Barclay: Mary had managed to *forget* the world's most *common* prayer: "Thy will be *changed*"; and to replace it with the world's *greatest* prayer: "Thy will be *done*!"

Testimony from Mary's visit to Elizabeth 1:39-56

[Luke continues with additional evidence that Jesus is Messiah, based on events that occurred when Mary visited Elizabeth during her pregnancy.]

Elizabeth and her unborn son, both affirm that Jesus is Messiah, even before Mary announced she was going to have a Son (1:39-45).

John's leap demonstrates his awareness of Jesus' significance. 39-41

Elizabeth's prophecy also confirms that Jesus is Messiah. 42-45

Mary is praised for trusting God to fulfill His Word 45

[Mary responds to Elizabeth's confirmation with a song of praise:]

PROPHETIC PRAISE OF MESSIAH'S MOTHER 1:46-56

Age? 16-17? If she was that young, she'd be *VERY* mature for her age!

She praises God because:

(1) The birth of Christ will lift *her* from her lowly state
 (2) God is going to fulfill His promises to Israel.
 It's *God* who deserves all the praise; *NOT* Mary!
 Notice how often she says, "*HE has [done something]* "
 He is the Savior—She needs One too!
 He has considered her *humble* condition—and exalted her!
 God's grace works the opposite of man's philosophies:
 [Notice what she says about His grace:]
 He has mercy for those who fear Him (who don't deserve it!)
 He brings down the mighty He exalts the humble
 He fills the hungry He makes the rich become poor
 He helps the servant (He dedicates Himself to His *servants*!)

CHARACTERISTICS OF MARY Things we see in her WE ought to imitate!

1. Mary understood God's plan 49b-55

She knew God's Word.

She was able to relate His Word to what He was doing in her day.

2. Mary had an attitude of submission and praise to God 46-49

She considered herself blessed—(even with consequences she faced?!!) —because of what God was doing—NOT because of what *she* would do!

3. Mary recognized her weakness 48

4. Mary didn't overlook the obstacles 34

She believed God—but not blindly.

She *understood* obstacles, and questioned how it could work out.

5. Mary accepted God's will for her life in spite of personal consequences 38

There's evidence this was true *before* angel's visit changes the course of her life!

Her engagement was in agreement with God's will for His faithful followers.

Her boy friend was also a godly person 1:27; Matt 1:19, 24

Matt. account describes him as righteous; tells how he did what God told him—To do what he did wasn't easy.

Mary was willing to do whatever God asked of her!

- **She risked her boy friend**
- **She risked her reputation**
- **She risked her plans for the future**
- **She risked her family and friends**
- **She even risked her own life**

BECAUSE SHE TRUSTED GOD AND WAS WILLING TO DO WHATEVER HE WANTED —NO MATTER WHAT IT MIGHT COST!

Charles Erdman: There was no shrinking on her part from all this promise might involve: suspicion, shame, reproach, suffering, even death. ***THOSE WHO BELIEVE MOST FIRMLY IN THE PROMISES OF GOD, SUBMIT MOST PATIENTLY TO HIS PROVIDENCES; THEY SEE THE GLORY WHICH SURELY WILL SUCCEED THE GLOOM.***

How about US?

Could it possibly cost US more?

*Are WE willing to trust God with OUR life? our plans? our future?
our family and friends? our boy friend or girl friend?*

God is able to accomplish ALL that He has said about US too!

Every promise! Every part of His plan!

He can do WHATEVER He says He will do for us!

Are WE willing to present OURSELVES as "slaves of the Lord?"

Are WE willing to say: "As for my life, let it be done just as you have spoken?"

"Whatever YOU have determined is best for me, that's what I want!"

"Whatever it may cost!!!"