

No Ordinary Child: A Mother's Believing Legacy

This week as we contemplate the truths concerning Christ's birth, one way to more fully appreciate the significance of all he accomplished is to revisit all that the Scripture reveals about his mother.

It's no secret that for the unsuspecting and easily persuaded, mistruths and outright lies told about Mary have served to obscure and minimize Christ's pre-eminence as the Son of God for centuries.

What may be less understood is that even the accurately instructed have often failed to fully appreciate the true believing impact of Christ's earthly mother's life, and her humility to learn from and follow him.

Jesus Christ learned the Word of God as he grew up in a believing home – and not just any believing home. According to Christ's genealogies listed in Matthew and Luke, both Mary and Joseph were descendants of Abraham and Sara, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Leah, Salmon and Rahab, Boaz and Ruth, as well as of King David.

AUTHORS OF GOD'S WORD IN THE LINE OF MARY

Consider for a moment Mary's forbears and descendants who were directly involved in writing the Word of God (both Old and New Testaments).

OLD TESTAMENT

Writer	Book(s)	Chapter(s)
David	Psalms	73 psalms
Solomon	Psalms Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Solomon	72 & 127 (entire book) (entire book) (entire book)
Hezekiah	Psalms	10 psalms

NEW TESTAMENT

Writer	Book(s)	Date(s)
James (the Lord's brother)	James	c. 45 A.D.
Jude (Judas, brother of James)	Jude	c. 46 A.D.

MARY'S RELATIVES

Not only did Mary come from a great line of authors of Scripture, many of her immediate family members were also noted in Scripture.

Matthew 1:20,21	Jesus (son of God)
John 19:25	Sister
Luke 1:36	Elizabeth (relative)
Matthew 1:18	Joseph (husband)
Matthew 13:55	James, Joseph, Simon, Judas (sons of Joseph)
Matthew 13:56	Sisters (daughters of Joseph)

MARY'S FRIENDS

The quality of Mary's character is confirmed by the character of her friends who were with her at the cross.

Mark 15:40	Salome (mother of apostles James and John)
Mark 15:40	Mother of apostle James the Younger and of Joseph
Mark 15:40	Mary Magdalene (to whom Christ first appeared)

MARY'S CHARACTER REVEALED IN SCRIPTURE

Mary's great humility and believing is revealed by what God's Word calls her.

Luke 1:20	O favored one
Luke 1:38	Servant of the Lord
Luke 1:42	Blessed among women
Luke 1:43	Mother of the lord

Furthermore, Mary's own song of praise is recorded in Luke 1:46-55.

MARY'S MENTORS AND COMFORTERS

Throughout her life, Mary was confronted with numerous trials. Here is a list of those who helped her along the way.

Luke 1:47	God my Savior
Luke 1:26,27	Gabriel (archangel)
Luke 1:36	Elizabeth (relative)
Matthew 1:24	Joseph (husband)
Luke 2:8,9	Shepherds (to whom angels appeared)
Luke 2:25,26	Simeon (waited to see the Lord's Christ)
Luke 2:36,37	Anna (widowed prophetess)
Matthew 2:1,2	Magi (come to worship him)
Mark 15:40	Women friends (with her at the cross)
John 1:26,27	Lazarus (took her in as his mother post-crucifixion)
Acts 1:13	The eleven (awaiting the outpouring)
Acts 1:14	Her newly believing sons (Jesus appeared to James)

DIRECT REFERENCES TO MARY IN SCRIPTURE

These are the passages of Scripture where Mary is directly mentioned:

Matthew 1	Birth of Jesus Christ
Matthew 2	Visit of the Magi
Matthew 12:46	Seeking an audience with her son
Luke 1	Birth foretold by the angel; sojourn with Elizabeth
Luke 2	Birth of Jesus Christ; vision of the shepherds
John 2:1-11	Jesus's first miracle
John 19:25	At the foot of the cross
Acts 1:14	In prayer in Jerusalem before Pentecost

“A SWORD WILL PIERCE THROUGH YOUR OWN SOUL ALSO” (Lk 2:35)

The name Mary means “bitter”. As the mother of the Messiah and as prophesied by Simeon, Mary certainly would have to navigate challenges that no ordinary mother would have to face. These included:

- Being unable to share the news of her pregnancy with others
- Becoming socially outcast as an unwed mother (whose fiancé was not the child's father)
- Over the course of her life as a mother, having to adjust to changes in her role from what a normal mother might have expected
 - Luke 1:48: “Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, **your father and I** have been searching for you in great distress.”
 - Luke 1:49: “Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in **my Father's** house?”
 - John 2:4: “**Woman** [sounds impersonal to us, but was nevertheless a term of respect and endearment in the culture], what does this have to do with me?”
- Hometown rejection (Nazareth neighbors' attempt to throw him off the brow of a hill)
- Jesus's statement about his true spiritual kin
 - Matthew 12:48: “Who is **my mother**, and who are my brothers?”
 - Matthew 12:49: “Here are **my mother** and my brothers!”
- Watching her son die on the cross
- Having her dying eldest entrust her to another, outside the family (not to her own living children)
 - John 19:26: “**Woman**, behold **your son!**”
 - John 19:27: “Behold, **your mother!**”
- Not being the first to whom he appeared after his resurrection (Mary Magdalene had that honor)

“HE WHO IS MIGHTY HAS DONE GREAT THINGS FOR ME” (Luke 1:49)

Despite the many challenges listed above, Mary had great consolation in her life, coming from the following sources:

- Luke 1:46: “My soul magnifies **the Lord**, and my spirit rejoices in **God my Savior.**”

- Appearance of Gabriel
- Elizabeth's son John the Baptist's miraculous conception and full-term delivery
- News of Zechariah's prophecy upon John's birth
- Mary's son Jesus's miraculous conception and full-term delivery
- Shepherds' account of the angels' visit
- Revelation and prophecy of Simeon
- Prophetess Anna's proclamation
- 12-year-old Jesus's "declaration of allegiance"
- Ministry of John the Baptist (their relative)
- Witnessing Jesus's first miracle (wedding water into wine)
- Lazarus's loving commitment to take care of her
- Tarrying in Jerusalem with the about 120 prior to Pentecost

"LET IT BE TO ME ACCORDING TO YOUR WORD" (Luke 1:38)

The angel said to Mary, "The Lord is with you!" And Mary later replied to the angel, "For nothing will be impossible with God. Behold, I am the servant of the Lord."

As the servant of the Lord, despite some trepidations along the way, overall Mary was consistently at the right place at the right time.

Scripture shows that she was either directly implicated, present, or nearby for the following occasions in Christ's life and ministry:

- Conception
- Birth
- Circumcision
- Confirmation (by Simeon and Anna)
- Adoration (of the Magi)
- Pilgrimage (to Egypt)
- Coming of age (in the Temple among the teachers)
- Sinless life
- One-year ministry
- Death
- Resurrection
- Ascension (possibly staying at Lazarus's in Bethany)
- Giving of the holy spirit on the day of Pentecost

The last record of Mary in the Word shows her awaiting the promise of the Father with the rest of the faithful in Jerusalem. In later years her son James went on to become the head of the church in Jerusalem and authored the Book of James, while her son Judas authored Jude.

As mother of the savior of the world, Mary's was no ordinary child. Then again, though manifestly human, Mary exhibited great humility and faithfulness throughout her life. This was her believing legacy.