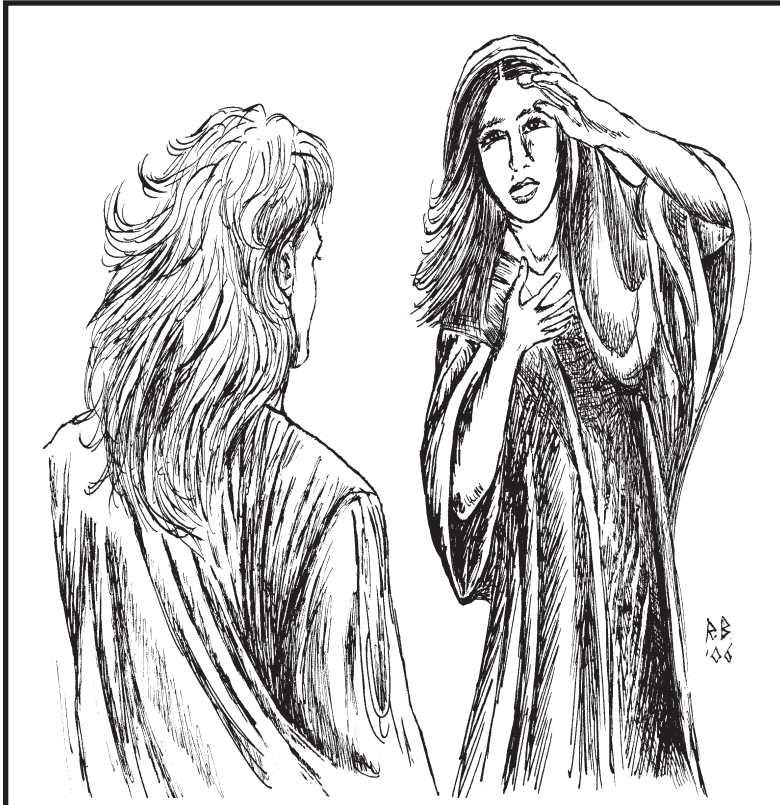


MARY, THE MOTHER OF JESUS



BIBLE STUDY GUIDE SERIES

CHRIST TO THE WORLD MINISTRIES



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Christ to the World Ministries is a nonprofit ministry dedicated to sharing the gospel of Christ with the world through radio dramas and printed and oral studies based on Scripture. The printed lessons can be studied by one person or by a group.

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For additional information, please visit our website at www.christtotheworld.com.

Dear Friend,

I am glad that you are interested in studying the Bible. It is God's Word to us and in it, we find the way of salvation and guidance for daily living. The main theme of the Bible is God's love for us and how he expressed that love by Jesus Christ dying on the cross for our sins. Jesus arose from the grave and today He will save every person who puts his or her faith and trust in Him.

This study guide will help you gain a better understanding of the Bible. Open your heart to what God has for you through the study. I have prayed that your study will be life changing.

May God bless you richly,

*Larry Alston
Christ to the World Ministries*



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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to a study about Mary, the mother of Jesus. This study guide is the second one

in a series on the life of Christ. The first study showed how God planned even before he created the world for his Son to come and be the Savior of the world. He worked over long centuries to prepare the world for the coming of the Savior.

God chose a young Jewish maiden from an obscure village in Galilee to be the mother of his Son. Mary was a virgin whose life was characterized by faith and deep humility. This study will help you understand the qualities of character Mary possessed. You will see that God's ways are not man's ways. He chooses the lowly things of this world so that no one may boast before him (1 Cor. 1:27-31). The study demonstrates that nothing is impossible with God.

You can write in this study guide. When the guide asks you to respond, don't simply think of your response. Take time to write it down. Write from your heart. No one else will see what you write.

Keep your Bible before you as you complete your study. When asked to read a passage of Scripture, take time to read it.

Ready? Then let's get started.

Begin your study with prayer. Make the following prayer your very own.

Dear God, please open your Word to me as I study. Speak to my heart. Help me obey your will for my life. Help me do what you want me to do. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen

THE SCRIPTURE

26 In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, 27 to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. 28 The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." Luke 1:26-56

29 Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. 30 But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. 31 You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, 33 and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

34 "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

35 The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. 36 Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. 37 For nothing is impossible with God."

38 "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said." Then the angel left her.

39 At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, 40 where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. 41 When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. 42 In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! 43 But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? 44 As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. 45 Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished."

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THE ANNOUNCEMENT TO MARY OF THE BIRTH OF JESUS

The great moment for which the people of God had been awaiting for hundreds of years finally arrived. The Messiah was ready to come. Would God send his angel Gabriel to Jerusalem to announce the birth of the Savior to some princess? No. Gabriel came to a peasant girl from a small town in Galilee engaged to be married to the village carpenter.

The young girl Mary lived in the small village of Nazareth. Not even mentioned in the Old Testament, Nazareth is about 80 miles north of Jerusalem and about 15 miles west of the Sea of Galilee. The town is perched on a hillside overlooking the broad Esdraelon Valley. The historic mountains of Tabor and Carmel are nearby and Hermon's snow-clad peak can be seen far to the north. The great highway from Egypt to Damascus could be seen from the town as it wound through the valley. Merchant caravans and legions of Roman soldiers could often be seen on the road. To this Galilean village the angel Gabriel came to announce to Mary that she had been chosen to give birth to the Savior. In this village Jesus afterwards spent his childhood and grew to manhood.

Mary was engaged to a man named Joseph. An engagement in that culture consisted of a legal contract, as binding as marriage itself. An engagement was arranged by a father seeking a wife for his son and the father of the bride. Girls as

young as 13 or 15 were customarily engaged to be married. The engagement period usually lasted a year. At the end of that time the couple came together as husband and wife.

Read Luke 1:29. Write in your own words in the space beside the picture above Mary's response to the appearance of the angel.



Gabriel's appearance and greeting startled Mary. The angel hastened to reassure her and tell her that she was highly favored by God. The angel explained that Mary had been chosen by God to give birth to the Savior. Mary questioned the angel's announcement and asked how it could be possible since she was a virgin. Gabriel told her that the Holy Spirit would come upon her and make it possible for her to conceive a child. To reassure Mary, Gabriel informed her that her relative Elizabeth, who had been barren many years, was going to have a child in her old age, and even now was in her sixth month of pregnancy. The angel assured the young maiden, "*Nothing is impossible with God*" (Luke 1:37). Mary humbly and unconditionally accepted the angel's announcement.

Read again Luke 1:26-38. Make a list of everything you can discover about Mary from these verses.

Mary was a young virgin who lived in the town of Nazareth in Galilee. She was engaged to marry Joseph. The angel Gabriel appeared to her and told her she would give birth to the Son of God. Overwhelmed by the announcement, Mary nevertheless accepted the news as an obedient servant of God.

In Luke 1:31-33, 35, the angel described the son to be born to Mary. **Read these verses and write at least six things you can discover about him.**

We can learn many things about Jesus from this passage. The child will be given the name Jesus. He will be great. He will be called the Son of the Most High. He will be given the throne of David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever. His kingdom will never end. He is a holy one. He is the Son of God.

Mary took the hint from Gabriel that perhaps she should visit her relative Elizabeth, wife of the aged priest Zechariah. She hurried and made the four or five day trip to the hill country of Judea, probably to a village south of Jerusalem. Mary no doubt felt a kinship to Elizabeth closer than blood since both of them had been miraculously blessed by God. She would find in Elizabeth an understanding person she could confide in and one who would provide her with wise counsel.

MARY'S VISIT TO ELIZABETH



When Mary greeted her aged relative, the baby in Elizabeth's womb leaped for joy, as though to salute the baby conceived in Mary's womb by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit filled Elizabeth. The Spirit of God gave her spiritual insight and she recognized Mary as the mother of the promised Redeemer. She cried out with a loud, Spirit-filled voice. She pronounced a blessing upon Mary and also a blessing upon the baby in Mary's womb. She acknowledged Mary as the mother of her Lord.

Why do you think Elizabeth recognized immediately that Mary was pregnant with the Savior? Check the correct response.

- Mary told her all that happened as soon as she arrived.
- Elizabeth possessed a perceptivity that came with age.
- The Holy Spirit revealed the information to Elizabeth.

Elizabeth walked daily with God. The Holy Spirit revealed to her that her relative would give birth to the Messiah.

After Elizabeth
blessed Mary, the
young virgin burst

MARY'S SONG OF PRAISE

out in a song of praise to God (Luke 1:46-55). The words of Mary are strongly reminiscent of Hannah's song of praise after God answered her prayer and gave her Samuel (1 Sam. 2:1-10). Mary's song is filled with at least 15 quotations or references to the Old Testament. This shows the reverence and love for the Word of God in Mary's home and in the home where Jesus grew up.

In the first part of the song, Mary praised God for what he had done for her (Luke 1:46-49). Then she sang about God's greatness and mercy. She sang of the difference between the world's view of greatness and God's view (Luke 1:50-53). She closed with a summary of God's mercy to Israel (Luke 1:54-55).

Read Luke 1:46-49. Write the four names Mary used for God in these verses.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Read Luke 1:50-53. Write in your own words what God has done for each of the following groups of people.

- Those who fear him _____
- The proud _____
- Rulers _____
- The humble _____
- The hungry _____
- The rich _____

Mary referred to God as Lord, God my Savior, the Mighty One, and holy. In singing about the world's view of greatness and God's view, Mary said that God would extend his mercy to those who fear him. He would scatter the proud and bring down rulers. He would lift up the humble. He would feed the hungry, but turn the rich away.

MARY'S THREE MONTHS WITH ELIZABETH

Luke writes: "*Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about three months and then returned home*" (Luke 1:56). Would it not be wonderful to have a recording of all the conversations between the two women during those three months? Their conversations would make a most interesting book. And to think, that all the while, poor Zechariah had to stand by silently while the women talked! Gabriel had rendered him unable to talk until the birth of their son John because he did not believe the angel's words. He had to take part in the conversation with his writing tablet. They likely spent their time meditating, talking, and rejoicing over the miraculous work of God in their lives.

MARY RETURNED TO NAZARETH

Mary returned to her home in Nazareth just before John was born. Knowing that the birth of the baby would be a big event and many people would gather, Mary probably preferred not to be there at that time.



As Mary made the long journey back to Nazareth, she likely thought of problems she would face when she got home.

Place a check beside each of the following problems that possibly awaited Mary when she got home.

- Joseph not understanding and thinking the worst
- Joseph breaking their engagement
- Mary's family not understanding
- The public stigma and scandal because of her pregnancy
- Gossip on the part of the people in her town
- Public stoning

Quite likely, all of the problems above, with the exception of a public stoning, awaited Mary when she arrived home. (Mosaic law commanded stoning for an engaged maiden found to be sexually unfaithful, along with the man who sinned with her. By New Testament times, however, authorities did not follow this practice.) Mary's absence for three months and then returning pregnant would only heighten the misunderstanding and ugly gossip. But Mary had complete trust in God. She gladly accepted the role God had chosen for her, whatever the consequences.

As Mary walked home, she pondered everything that happened. No doubt she wondered about the future. She wondered what God had in store for her and for the baby in her womb. Little did she know that in six months she would be making this long journey again, this time to the little town of Bethlehem, and accompanied by her husband. As she walked up the hill to the village of Nazareth, she knew the future was in God's hands. And she knew also that she had placed her own life in his hands. Mary was ready.

CONCLUSION

Examine the three drawings in this lesson.

Using the drawings as cues, write in your own words a brief summary of this lesson. Do not refer to Luke 1 as you do this.

Now check your work by reading Luke 1:26-56. Make any changes you like in your summary above.

Summarize in a sentence or two the main thing God has taught you in this study.

It may seem strange that God would choose a young girl from an obscure village to give birth to his Son, our Savior. However, “*Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart*” (1 Sam. 16:7).

What do you think God saw when he looked at Mary’s heart?

Mary was not sinless. She trusted God to save her. She referred to God as her “*Savior*” (Luke 1:47). But I think that when God looked at her heart he saw love and obedience and submissiveness. He saw her desire to serve him. He saw her strong faith and deep humility. He saw her willingness to commit her way to him, trusting him, knowing that he would do whatever was best. He saw her availability.

What do you think God sees when he looks at your heart? Examine the following list and place a check beside each item you think God sees in your heart.

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> love | <input type="checkbox"/> obedience | <input type="checkbox"/> loneliness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> hurt | <input type="checkbox"/> submissiveness | <input type="checkbox"/> emptiness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> faith | <input type="checkbox"/> anger | <input type="checkbox"/> humility |
| <input type="checkbox"/> bitterness | <input type="checkbox"/> trust | <input type="checkbox"/> fear |

Examine the list again. Now circle each item that you would like for God to see in your heart.

Commit this Bible verse to memory: “*For nothing is impossible with God*” (Luke 1:37).

God can change your life. Jesus can forgive your sins. He can set you free. He is the compassionate Savior who loves you with an everlasting love.

The Bible teaches that you are a sinner. But God loves you and sent his Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross for your sins. You receive Christ as your Savior by turning from your sin and placing your faith and trust in him.

Pray this prayer: “Dear God, I know that I’m a sinner. I believe that Jesus died for my sins and rose from the dead and is alive today. I now turn from my sins. I am placing my faith and trust in Jesus alone to be my Savior and to forgive me. I receive Jesus into my life as my Savior and Lord. From this day forward, I will follow Jesus. Thank you, Lord Jesus, for loving me and for coming into my life. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.”

Welcome into God’s family!

Share with others that you have received Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord. Ask for baptism by immersion in a local church as a public expression of your faith. If there is no church near you, start a church by gathering a group of persons in your home and worship together on a regular basis. Read your Bible and pray each day. Tell others what Christ has done for you and what he can do for them.