

The Continuation of Mary's Story:

PART 2:

Mary's Magnificat:

Mary's relationship with Joseph: We know little about Mary and Joseph's relationship. Tradition suggest that Joseph was older than Mary, and from what we know of the marriage practices in 1st century Judaism, this seem likely. Quiet frequently young girls were betrothed to older men who had established themselves as able to support a family.

We also know that Joseph died before Mary, and probably before Jesus began his public ministry. Matt. 13:55 calls Jesus “the carpenter's son”, while Mark 6:3 quotes some of Jesus' neighbors calling Him “the carpenter, the Son of Mary”. As eldest Son, Jesus would have learned His father's trade, and when Joseph died, he would have taken his place as “the carpenter”.

We know other things about Joseph and Mary's relationship. Matthew tells us that when Joseph discovered Mary was pregnant, he considered a private divorce. Joseph was sensitive and fair. Although he must have been hurt by Mary's supposed unfaithfulness, Joseph was not vindictive. A quiet, voiding of the marriage contract into which he had entered with Mary's father might offer Mary some protection from gossip. Joseph was also a man of faith. When an angel told Joseph that Mary had not been unfaithful. Joseph listened and went ahead with the wedding.

Joseph gave no thought to his personal reputation or the fact the the community might conclude that he and Mary had had sexual relations before the marriage. Joseph loved and trusted God and was willing to obey Him. In this vital quality, Joseph and Mary, despite any disparity in age were will matched.

Their relationship produced a large number of additional children. Mathew specifically mentions four brothers – James, Joses, Simon, and Judas – and an unspecified number of sisters. Mary had a healthy normal relationship with Joseph. Together they provided an ideal home for Jesus and their other children.

Mary's relationship with Jesus: (Luke 2:33): Despite the early evidence that Jesus was indeed special, the Gospels suggest that Christ grew up as a “normal” child, so that even Mary's vision of His identity was clouded, which was all part of God's plan for His Son.

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Early evidence of Jesus' uniqueness (Matt. 1; Luke 1-2). So many events marked Jesus as special in Mary's mind. There was the angel's visit. The miraculous pregnancy. Joseph's confirmation of his confidence of her virgin state. When Jesus was born, shepherds appeared with their tale of angels celebrating in Bethlehem's skies. Luke 2:19 states that “Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart.”

Two months later, Mary and Joseph went to the temple for her purification and Jesus' presentation to the LORD. There the aged Simeon and the prophetess Anna recognized the infant Jesus as the promised Messiah. Certainly Mary and Joseph remembered the angel's words to them. Yet the Bible says that “Joseph and His mother marveled at those things which were spoken of Him” (Luke 2:33).

About two years later the wise men found the little family, still in Bethlehem, and not only brought Him gifts but also worshiped Him. Guided by angels, Joseph took Mary and Jesus first to Egypt, and then back to Nazareth. During these early years there were many reminders that Jesus was special child indeed.

Mary's relationship with the child Jesus (Luke 2: 41-51). While the apocryphal books tell imaginative tales of miracles supposedly performed by Jesus as a child, the Scriptures draw a curtain across Jesus' childhood years. Luke gives us our only glimpse into Christ's childhood. Luke relates a visit to Jerusalem when Jesus was twelve. There the young Jesus amazed aged scholars with His insights in Scripture and was so engaged in His discussions that He missed the family caravan back to

Nazareth. Later, when His parents found him, Mary rebuked Jesus: “Son, why have You done this us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously” (Luke 2:48). Jesus responded, “Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?” (Luke 2:49.) While Jesus was aware of His identity and mission, Mary seem unaware.

Luke concluded his remarks by saying that “then He went with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart” (2:51). Jesus lived the life of a normal, growing boy. That Jesus was so normal a child in her large family must have led Mary to treat Jesus with the same love and discipline as her other sons and daughters.

Mary's relationship with Jesus changes (John 2:1-5). Jesus' baptism by John and His identification as God's Son initiated a significant change in Jesus' life. He had lived in Nazareth and followed Joseph's trade as a carpenter. At some point Joseph had died, and it was Jesus' responsibility – along with His brothers – to care for their widowed mother.

On the way back to Galilee after His baptism, Jesus and several friends who later became disciples stopped to share in a wedding celebration in Cana. When the wine ran out, Mary found Jesus and reported, “They have no wine” (John 2:3). Jesus' responded

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in words that must have shocked Mary. Jesus addressed her as “woman”, and added the Greek phrase “*ti emoi kai soi*”, which means literally “what to me and to you.” This is an ambiguous phrase, but one that clearly implies separation. The *Victor Bible Background Commentary, New Testament*, comments : Jesus is about to perform the first of His miraculous signs; a sign that will reveal His glory and move His disciples to “put their faith in Him” (2:11). Long ago Jesus had insisted that “ I had to be in my Father's house (Luke 2:49). Yet Jesus returned to Nazareth, and lived as a child in Mary and Joseph's house. But now, at last, He is about to set out on the Father's business, even though the final hour of that service lies far off in the future. Gently Jesus rejects Mary's : Woman, what to me and to you? Woman, now no earthly relationship can bind me, for at last I am setting our on My Father's business.

Mary bows now to her son, and says to the servants, “Do whatever He tells you”. (2:5). Jesus is now subject to the Father alone, and because of that, all humankind is subject to Christ as LORD.

Mary fails to understand: (Matt. 12:46-50; Mark 3:31; Luke 8:19-21). Each of the synoptic Gospels notes that shortly after Jesus' opponents have charged him with being either mad or in league with Satan that “His brothers and His mother came and standing outside they are calling Him.” (Mark 3:31). Clearly this was a family delegation coming with the intent not of listening to Jesus but of speaking to Him. The context is important, for they came at the moment when opposition to Jesus was becoming open. It is also important to remember that long after this time “even His brothers did not believe in Him” John 7:25.

Why had the family delegation come? They had come to counsel this Son and Brother who was stirring up the countryside. They had come to try to calm Jesus – to urge Him to be less controversial.

Jesus response clearly fits this interpretation and make an important point. Jesus did not go out to meet with His family. Instead He asked, “Who is My mother, or My brothers?” (Mark 3:33). Any human being can have a family relationship with Jesus, but that relationship can only be established by putting that trust in the Savior that God requires.

As sensitive and responsive to God as Mary was, she was puzzled by Jesus' ministry and uncertain about what He was doing. Mary's confusion was not due to any lack of faith. Mary, like so many others, simply was waiting to see how God's purpose in Jesus would unfold.

Mary among the disciples: (John 19:25-27; Acts 1:14). We next meet Mary standing near the cross with women friends and John the disciple. We cannot imagine Mary's pain during those bitter hours. What happened reveals Jesus' special concern for His mother.

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As He hung on the cross Jesus took note of Mary and John. Fixing his gaze on Mary, Jesus nodded toward John and said, “Woman, behold your son” (John 19:26). And then gazing at John, he nodded toward Mary, saying, “Behold your mother!” John understood Jesus' request, and “from that hour that disciple took her to his own home” (John 19:27). Despite Christ's earlier statement about family relationships, Mary held a special place in His heart.

Only after the resurrection shed its light on Jesus' mission and His essential nature as God's Son did Mary fully and completely believe in her Son. The last mention of Mary in the New Testament pictures “Mary the mother of Jesus” with His brothers (Acts 1:14) meeting with the disciples, praying to the One with whom they had never truly known.

The relationship between Mary and Jesus was complicated by the fact that although Jesus was God the Son He lived in this world as a true human being. He grew up as a child subject to His parents. At 30 He set out on a course the direction of which neither Mary nor Jesus' brothers could understand. Only after His death and resurrection did the family finally understand that the Son and Brother who had lived among them was indeed God incarnate. Then, and only then, did all become clear, and Jesus' earthly family worshiped Him.

MARY: A CLOSE-UP.

Even as a young girl Mary showed herself to have great faith. Her response to God was immediate and self-less, and her words of praise reveal an appealing simplicity. Quite possibly no other Biblical person so clearly displays the truth of Augustine's observance: love God, and do as you please. Mary did love God, and what pleased her was to do God's will.

At the same time Mary was human. As her family grew, Mary loved her husband and mothered her boys and girls. She must have thought often of the strange events that marked her oldest, Jesus, as special. Yet she mothered Him as she did the others, and He submitted to her parental authority. Mary's days were filled with the typical task of first-century housewives: grinding grain, cooking meals, weaving cloth, directing her children's activities, talking with her husband. In this she was indistinguishable from other women in her village. She was undoubtedly known as warm and friendly, a

good friend and a caring person. Even Jesus Himself during these years seemed no different than others. When Jesus began His public ministry, Mary seems to have been puzzled. She was as amazed as others were at His teaching and healings. Knowing her innate humility, we can be sure Mary never postured or bragged of being the mother of the Man all Israel was talking about. In the end, after Jesus rose and His identity as God's Son was no longer in doubt, Mary took her place with the others who believed in Him.

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And that place was on her knees.

Here, as in every glimpse of Mary that Scripture provides, we see her as a model believer. The Mary of Scripture is an exemplar of faith in God. Mary is a sister in Christ to be admired, appreciated, and honored. Mary is a woman whose example all are privileged to follow.

MARY AN EXAMPLE FOR TODAY.

- Every Believer should have a faith similar to Mary's. Each day we should pray, "Behold the [servant] of the LORD! Let it be to me according to your word" (Luke 1:38). This is a simple prayer of faith and submission to God's will.
- Mary valued her commitment to God far above others' opinions. Rather than hesitate to accept the angel's commission because of what others might think, she chose God's will. It is not what people think of us that counts, but God's assessment.
- Even Mary did not understand fully the import of Jesus' teachings. She had been inseminated by the Holy Spirit and visited by an angel telling her to name her son "Jesus" (Savior). She had also been told that the "Holy One who is to

be born will be called the Son of God” (Luke 1:35). So it shouldn't surprise us if we don't understand the plan God has for our children and us.

- Mary's life reveals meditative wisdom. Mary remembered the wise men's words and “pondered them in her heart” (Luke 2:19). After finding the boy Jesus in the temple debating with the sages, Mary “kept all these things in her heart” (v.51). There are special incidents that we may not fully understand, but, like Mary, we should store them in our hearts until God provides further insights.
- Mary kept herself sexually pure. Before marriage, in fact until after the birth of Jesus, Mary had no sexual relations with her husband. She continued to be a faithful wife to Joseph and a celibate widow after her husband's death. God's best for every man and woman is a sexually pure life.

Anymouse.

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