

I. JOSEPH AND MARY

- A. Luke's account tells the story mostly from the perspective of Mary.

In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a village in Galilee, to a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of King David. Gabriel appeared to her and said, "Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you!" Confused and disturbed, Mary tried to think what the angel could mean. "Don't be afraid, Mary," the angel told her, "for you have found favor with God! You will conceive and give birth to a Son, and you will name Him Jesus. He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give Him the throne of His ancestor David. And He will reign over Israel forever; His Kingdom will never end!" Mary asked the angel, "But how can this happen? I am a virgin." The angel replied, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the baby to be born will be holy, and He will be called the Son of God.

What's more, your relative Elizabeth has become pregnant in her old age! People used to say she was barren, but she has conceived a son and is now in her sixth month. For the word of God will never fail." Mary responded, "I am the Lord's servant. May everything you have said about me come true." And then the angel left her.
Luke 1:26-38

A few days later Mary hurried to the hill country of Judea, to the town where Zechariah lived. She entered the house and greeted Elizabeth. At the sound of Mary's greeting, Elizabeth's child leaped within her, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. Elizabeth gave a glad cry and exclaimed to Mary, "God has blessed you above all women, and your Child is blessed. Why am I so honored, that the mother of my Lord should visit me? When I heard your greeting, the baby in my womb jumped for joy." Mary stayed with Elizabeth about three months and then went back home.
Luke 1:39-44, 56

- B. So much of God is revealed in the fact that the preexistent Christ chose to entrust His humanity to a young teenage girl in a very obscure town in northern Israel (Nazareth). As the wealthy and educated fought for power and prestige in Jerusalem, the angel Gabriel was visiting a young girl in a small town announcing the coming change of human history forever. It goes to show that what is seemingly insignificant from the human perspective is not necessarily a view shared by God. If God is in it...it's a big deal!

- C. Matthew's gospel tells the story mostly from the perspective of Joseph.

This is how Jesus the Messiah was born. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. But before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit. Joseph, to whom she was engaged, was a righteous man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he decided to break the engagement quietly. As he considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. "Joseph, son of David," the angel said, "do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the Child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit. And she will have a Son, and you are to name Him Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." Matthew 1:18-21

"Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a Son, and they will call Him Immanuel, which means 'God is with us' (Isaiah 7:14)." When Joseph woke up, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded and took Mary as his wife. But he did not have sexual relations with her until her Son was born. And Joseph named Him Jesus. Matthew 1:23-25

- D. It is difficult to exaggerate how scandalous it would've been for Mary to be pregnant before their marriage. To be caught in adultery while being engaged was punishable by death according to the law of Moses that the Jews lived by (Deuteronomy 22:20-21). Joseph planned to end the engagement privately sparing her shame and possibly her life.
- E. Though much of the Christmas story is focused on Mary, it's worth noting the kind of God-fearing man that Joseph must have been. His visitation came in a dream, and he believed God. The Bible calls him a "righteous man" and he did what was right in a very difficult situation.

II. THE LOVE OF GOD

For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.
John 3:16

Then Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved.
John 21:20



- A. John had one of greatest “resumes” in history. He cared for Mary, the mother of Jesus (John 19:26-27), was instrumental in great revivals such as Jerusalem (Acts 1-6), Samaria (Acts 8), then he became bishop over the mighty church of Ephesus that reached all of Asia (Acts 19:10). John wrote five books in the Scripture (John, 1st, 2nd, 3rd John & Revelation) and was promised to rule on a throne in Israel during the Kingdom to come (Matthew 19:28) and to have his name written on one of the foundations in the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:14). Concerning the next age John received more insight than any other biblical author by receiving the book of Revelation near the end of his life.
- B. Yet John saw himself in context to how he related to Jesus more than what he accomplished for Jesus. John saw himself as the one whom Jesus loved and enjoyed, and this moved him more than any of his accomplishments in ministry. John referred to himself **five times** in this way throughout his gospel (John 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20).
- C. This is how John wanted to be known throughout history, *the one whom Jesus loved*.
- D. Our primary reward in life is to know and experience the love of Jesus.

Now this is eternal life: that they know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. John 17:3

- E. Loving God is the highest calling we have. It’s our primary purpose. *You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. Matthew 22:37-38*
- F. God feels love towards us the way He feels love towards Jesus. *“As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love.” John 15:9*
- G. Our confession of His word: *He delivered me because He delighted in me. Psalm 18:19*
As for the saints who are on the earth, “They are the excellent ones, in whom is all delight.” Psalm 16:3
He shall pray to God, and He will delight in him, he shall see His face with joy. Job 33:26
“I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will assuredly plant them in this land, with all My heart and with all My soul.” Jeremiah 32:41
