



# Mary & Joseph



God's promise to save mankind from their sin was about to be fulfilled. God chose simple, ordinary people to be involved in this miraculous event. God still graciously invites people who believe in Him to be a part of His plan.

## Day #1: Simple Faith

Have you ever heard the saying, "You can't judge a book by its cover?" A book may look very plain and boring on the outside. But when you open it and begin reading the pages, it may be too exciting to put down! This popular saying warns us not to judge a person by how he or she looks on the outside. Today we'll see that God never looks at the outward appearance of people. He looks at their hearts (1 Samuel 16:7)

Zechariah's wife, Elizabeth, had a relative named Mary. She lived in a town called Nazareth. She was probably around 15 years old, and she was engaged to marry a man named Joseph. Mary and Joseph were both Jewish. When Elizabeth had been pregnant for six months, a special visitor came to give Mary a message from God. It was Gabriel, the same angel who had appeared to Zechariah in the temple.

**+** *The angel greeted her and said, "The Lord has given you special favor. He is with you." - John 1:28*

The sight of the angel frightened Mary, but he told her not to be afraid.

*The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary. **God is very pleased with you.**" - John 1:30*

Can you imagine hearing these words from God's messenger? Mary must have been overwhelmed to hear that God was pleased with her. The Bible tells us that nothing we can **do** will please God (Isaiah 64:6). So what is it that pleases God? Hebrews 11:6 tells us, "Without **faith** it is impossible to please God."

By the world's standards, Mary was not an important person. She didn't wear fancy clothes; she wasn't wealthy; she wasn't royal. She was a just humble girl who had faith in God. And her faith pleased God.

*The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart. - 1 Samuel 16:7b NIV*

Day #1 continued:



Find an old book with a worn out cover and place it in your room to remind you that God does not look at the outside of a person. Ask God to give you faith that pleases Him (Ephesians 2:8).

## Day #2: The Name Above All

The angel Gabriel had more amazing news for Mary:



*You will become pregnant and give birth to a son. You must name Him **Jesus**. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High God. The Lord God will make him a King like his father David of long ago. He will rule forever over His people, who came from Jacob's family. His kingdom will never end." - Luke 1:28-32*

Just imagine, Mary was the first person to hear the name of JESUS! The name Jesus means, "Jehovah is salvation," or "The one true God saves." This was the name by which all people could be saved from the punishment of their sin (Acts 4:12). This was the name of the Messiah that people had awaited for thousands of years! This is the name by which our prayers are heard and accepted by God (John 16:23). What a privilege it was for Mary to hear the angel speak the name of Jesus!

Mary asked how she could possibly have a baby since she was not married yet. The angel told her that God's Holy Spirit would make it happen (Luke 1:35). Mary knew people would think it was very strange that she would have a baby before she was married. She must have wondered how she would tell her family, and how she would tell Joseph. Yet, Mary believed the angel, and she was willing to obey the Lord.

*"I serve the Lord," Mary answered. "May it happen to me just as you said it would." - Luke 1:38b*



Mary was the first person to have the privilege of hearing the name of Jesus. Every language has a way to say the name of Jesus. Try to speak some of them:

- Gesù (Italian) · Jezus (Dutch) · Jesús (Spanish)
- Yesu (Swahili) · Iesu (Samoa) · Isus (Romainian)
- イエス (Japanese) · Jesucristo (Tagalong)
- Jeesus (Finnish) · Heswita (Filipino) · يسوع (Arabic)



(Sign Language)

Pray that more and more people hear about the saving power of Jesus' name.

## Day #3: A Special Visit

Mary had been chosen to bear the infant Messiah. Mary's cousin, Elizabeth, had been pregnant for six months at this time. In those days, people didn't have telephones to call each other. The news about Elizabeth had not yet gotten to Mary. Before Gabriel left Mary, the angel told her one more piece of good news.

 *Your relative Elizabeth is old. And even she is going to have a child. People thought she could not have children. But she has been pregnant for six months now. **Nothing is impossible with God.*** - Luke 1:36-37

Right away, Mary left her home to visit Elizabeth. The Bible says she hurried (Luke 1:39)! Surely, Mary couldn't wait to talk to Elizabeth. Even if no one else would believe Mary, she knew Elizabeth would understand and believe. Both of these women had been chosen by God, and both had been given miraculous pregnancies - Elizabeth was too old, and Mary was too young, and still unmarried. Mary must have felt no one on earth could possibly understand what she was feeling as well as Elizabeth could.

*When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby inside her jumped. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. In a loud voice she called out, "God has blessed you more than other women. And blessed is the child you will have!"* - Luke 1:41-42

Did you hear that? Baby John leapt for joy inside his mother's womb as soon as he heard Mary's voice! We know that Mary believed the angel when he came to her (Luke 1:45). And, with this beautiful greeting from Elizabeth confirming what she already knew to be true, Mary could not contain her praise.

*Mary said, "My soul gives glory to the Lord. My spirit delights in God my Savior. He has taken note of me even though I am not important. From now on all people will call me blessed. The Mighty One has done great things for me. His name is holy." - Luke 1:46-49*

 Remember that nothing is impossible with God! (Young children: Can you jump for joy like baby John did?) Take turns listing reasons to praise God, just as Mary and Elizabeth did.

## Day #4: Joseph

Mary stayed with Elizabeth and Zechariah for three months before she returned to her home in Nazareth.

Mary was engaged to a godly man named Joseph (Matthew 13:55). Way back in Joseph's family, Joseph was related to the Jewish king David. But Joseph was not royal. He was a carpenter who built things out of wood for his job.

Before Mary and Joseph were married, Mary became

Day #4 continued:

pregnant, just as the angel said it would happen. Joseph didn't know what to think about this. So the Lord sent an angel to Joseph in a dream.

 *The angel said, "Joseph, son of David, don't be afraid to take Mary home as your wife. The baby inside her is from the Holy Spirit. She is going to have a Son. You must give Him the name Jesus. That is because He will save his people from their sins."* - Matthew 1:20b-21

The angel also said that another name for Jesus would be Immanuel, which means "God with us." Jesus was fully God, and He was coming to earth to be with His people.

The angel told Joseph that all these things would happen to fulfill God's promises about the Messiah (Isaiah 7:14). God ALWAYS keeps His promises! Joseph believed the angel and chose to obey God (Matthew 1:24).

 Take a moment to pray for faith to believe God fully, and ask for a willing spirit to do whatever God asks you to do (Mark 9:24, Psalm 51:12).

## Day #5: Still

Mary and Joseph were regular people. They did not wear glowing halos, as some paintings show them. On the outside, they looked like everybody else. But on the inside, they had faith in God. They believed His word, and they were willing to obey whatever He said. Because of their simple faith and their obedience, God used them in His mighty plan.

**God still uses regular people to be involved in His plan!** The Lord is not looking for people who have great skills to do great things. In fact, He is looking for those who have nothing on their own and who simply put all their trust in Him. The Lord says:

 *"My grace is all you need. My power is strongest when you are weak."* - 2 Corinthians 12:9b

As we saw with Elizabeth and Mary, God uses those who are young and those who are old. God pours out His grace on humble people who believe in Him (1 Peter 5:5). And He empowers those He has chosen with the Holy Spirit (Romans 15:19). Trust in the Lord, and follow Him completely when He invites you to join in His plan to draw all people to Himself (Psalm 67:2, Revelation 14:6-7).

 Remember, even though you are young, God has a special plan for you! Ask God if there is something He would like you to do to show His love to someone else this Christmas season. (He might want you to bake cookies for a lonely neighbor, or donate warm clothes to a homeless shelter.) Listen for God's voice inviting you to be a part of His plan.