

WHAT DID MARY KNOW?

This song asks an intriguing question: what did Mary understand about the baby boy to whom she gave birth? The truth is, we don't know. But we do know what she was told about her son...

WHAT DID MARY LEARN FROM THE ANGEL GABRIEL?

(Luke 1:26-38)

Most scholars believe that Mary was a teenager when she was visited by the angel Gabriel.

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" ²⁹But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. ³²He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, ³³and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

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

³⁵And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. ³⁶And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. ³⁷For nothing will be impossible with God." ³⁸And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

Luke 1:26-38

What did Mary learn about her baby from the angel Gabriel?

First, she learned that her baby would be a boy. That made it a lot easier to pick out clothes and to paint his room☺

Second, she learned that she was to name Him Jesus. This would be very meaningful to Mary. The book of Luke was written in Greek. The name Jesus is Greek and is a transliteration of the Hebrew name Joshua. Assuming Mary's heart language was Hebrew, Gabriel was telling her to name her son Joshua which means "Jehovah is salvation".¹

Third, Gabriel revealed to Mary that her son would be great and would be called the Son of the Most High and that God would give her son the throne of David and that He would reign over the nation of Israel forever.

¹ Strong's Hebrew #3091

Now we hear, “Son of the Most High” with our “New Testament” ears and interpret that phrase to mean deity. But in this context, Mary would have understood that phrase to refer, not to her son’s deity, but to her son’s royalty. You see, the kings of Israel were referred to as sons of God.

When God made His Covenant with King David, God referred to Solomon, David’s successor, as His son.

**¹⁴ I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son.
2 Samuel 7:14 (ESV)**

In Psalm 2, a song that was sung at the coronation ceremony for the kings of Israel, the king was referred to as the son.

² The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against his Anointed...

⁴ He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision. ⁵ Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, ⁶ “As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill.”

**¹² Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.
Psalm 2:2, 4-6,12 (ESV)**

When Gabriel revealed to Mary that her son would be called *Son of the Most High* and that he will reign over Israel, Gabriel was revealing that Mary’s son would fulfill the Davidic Covenant.

The Davidic Covenant promised to King David and the nation of Israel that they would have an eternal dynasty, an eternal kingdom and an eternal throne. For an Israelite like Mary, the fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant was the fulfillment of her dream to live free.

Keep in mind that Mary, Joseph and all the rest of the nation of Israel were living under the boot of Roman imperialism. They longed for the promised Messiah to come and deliver them from their enemies and once again restore the glory of David’s Kingdom. Mary was made to understand that her son was the promised Messiah and the ultimate fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant. Now, did she understand how and when all that would be worked out in Jesus’ life? No. But she understood the big picture Gabriel was giving her.

One part of the picture she didn’t understand yet was how she was going to have this baby.

³⁴ And Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?”

³⁵ And the angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God.

The final thing that Gabriel revealed to Mary about her baby was that he was not going to be conceived in the normal way. Though Mary was betrothed to Joseph, Joseph was not going to be the baby’s father. The Holy Spirit of God was going to supernaturally fertilize Mary’s egg to conceive this child. Mary’s child would be called the Son of God.

Again, did Mary understand the implications of what Gabriel was revealing to her? Did she at this moment grasp that her son would be fully man and fully God?

We don't know what all Mary understood, but perhaps she understood that what was happening to her was prophesied clear back in the Garden of Eden. Perhaps she now understood why the One prophesied to defeat Satan would be reckoned by his mother and not a human father.

¹⁵ I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

Genesis 3:15 (ESV)

Perhaps Mary understood that she was the virgin spoken of by the prophet Isaiah

¹⁴Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son...

Isaiah 7:14 (ESV)

Whether Mary understood all these things or not, her response reveals a woman of extraordinary character and faith:

³⁸And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word."

Mary may have understood some or all these things. We don't know.

But you and I today, with God's Word in our hands, should understand these things. Gabriel emphasized two things in his announcement to Mary.

First, Gabriel revealed that Mary's son would be a King. Jesus was not crowned a King at His first coming. In fact, when Jesus began His public ministry, His cousin John introduced Jesus not as a King, but as a Lamb

²⁹ The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

John 1:29 (ESV)

But this was God's plan. As the Lamb of God, Jesus came to lay down His life as a sacrifice to pay the penalty for man's sins. As the Lamb, Jesus fulfilled the meaning of His name: Jehovah is salvation.

But Gabriel made it clear that Mary's baby would be a king. Jesus is coming a second time to the earth, not as a Lamb, but as a Lion (Revelation 5:5). His second coming to establish His kingdom on earth is described in the book of Revelation.

¹¹ Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. ¹² His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. ¹³ He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. ¹⁴ And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. ¹⁵ From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. ¹⁶ On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.

Revelation 19:11–16 (ESV)

The Bible also tells us that one day every living being will acknowledge the Lordship of Jesus.

⁹Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2:9–11 (ESV)

The invitation from God is to submit to Jesus as Savior and King of your life today.

One of the main reasons why many of us believe the Bible is God's Word and that Jesus is God's Son is because of fulfilled prophecy. The second thing Gabriel emphasized to Mary was that Mary would conceive her son by the power of the Holy Spirit. This was not a new and novel idea; it had been predicted in the 8th century B.C. through the prophet Isaiah and it had been implied clear back in the Garden of Eden when God revealed that the seed of the woman would defeat Satan. Even if Mary did not understand all of this, you should.

WHAT DID MARY LEARN FROM THE SHEPHERDS?

(Luke 2:8-20)

On the night that Jesus was born, an angel appeared to shepherds guarding sheep in the fields surrounding Bethlehem. Luke tells us that they found Mary and Joseph and relayed to them what the angel had told the shepherds.

⁸ And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. ¹⁰ And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹ For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, ¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!" ¹⁵ When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶ And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. ¹⁷ And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. ¹⁸ And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. ²⁰ And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Luke 2:8–20 (ESV)

Luke tells us that Mary treasured up all the things the shepherds told her and Joseph. What did the shepherds tell Mary?

The angel told the shepherds that the baby was a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

To Mary these would have been incredible words. The word *Christ* is Greek for the Hebrew word *Messiah*. Like many Jews today, Mary would have grown up her whole life hearing about Messiah and longing for Messiah to come and set her people free from the Romans. It is probably in this sense that she understood the term Savior – that her son would save the nation of Israel from Roman tyranny. It was this Conquering Messiah that her people were looking for as prophesied in the Scriptures.

⁶ For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷ Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

Isaiah 9:6–7 (ESV)

But perhaps Mary had heard about the Suffering Messiah Who would die for the sins of her people

⁴ Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. ⁵ But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed.

Isaiah 53:4–5 (ESV)

Did Mary understand that her baby boy would be both the Suffering Messiah and the Conquering Messiah? At His first coming, Jesus came to offer Himself as the ultimate blood sacrifice to pay the penalty for Israel's sins. At His first coming, Jesus was the Suffering Messiah.

At His second coming, Jesus will come to defeat His enemies and establish His kingdom. At His second coming, Jesus will be the Conquering Messiah.

Whether Mary understood this or not, we don't know. But you and I need to understand these things.

You must first accept Jesus as your Suffering Messiah in order to experience Him as your Conquering Messiah.

As the Suffering Messiah Jesus came to die in your place on the cross and to pay the penalty for all your sins, past, present and future. Jesus Himself explained that

¹⁶ ...God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

John 3:16 (ESV)

What is sin? Sin is disobeying God. Sin is missing the mark of God's holy standard for our lives. The Bible tells us that all of us have sinned; all of us have disobeyed God and missed the mark of His holy standard for our lives.

²³ ...all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Romans 3:23 (ESV)

God is perfect and holy. Though He created you and loves you, He cannot be near you because of your sin. The Bible tells us that the consequence of our sin is to be separated from God.

**²³ ...the wages of sin is death
Romans 6:23 (ESV)**

To be dead in this context means to be separated from God. Some of us in this room are separated from God; we are spiritually dead. We feel it inside ourselves. We have no peace. We have no joy. We feel anxious inside and death scares us. We are separated from God.

The problem is this: how can I get right with God? I know I've broken God's law. I lie. I steal. I gossip. So I know that I'm a sinner. So how do I get right with God?

Some people will tell you that you need to keep the Ten Commandments. But that won't work because even if from this moment on you kept the Ten Commandments perfectly (which you couldn't), how do you undo all the sins you've already committed against God?

Some people will tell you that if you do more good things than bad things that the scale will tip in your favor and God will accept you. But the Bible tells us that God's scale is all or nothing

**¹⁰ For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it.
James 2:10 (ESV)**

Finally, a lot of people will tell you that it doesn't matter. They will either tell you there is no God so don't worry about it. Or they will tell you that if there is a God, He loves everybody and wouldn't send anybody to hell. They would be right that God loves everybody, but they would be wrong that He wouldn't send anybody to hell. God is not only loving, He is also good and just and He must punish evil.

Here is the bad news: there is nothing you can do to make yourself right with God. But here is the good news: God has done everything that needs to be done for you to get right with Him. The Bible tells us that

**²⁴ He himself (Jesus) bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.
1 Peter 2:24 (ESV)**

God put the guilt of all your sin into Jesus' body when Jesus hung crucified on that Roman cross. God poured out His judgment on Jesus and Jesus died for your sin. Then Jesus was buried and on the third day came back to life. God accepted Jesus' payment on your behalf. Your sins are completely paid for and forgiven. God is offering you complete forgiveness because of what Jesus did for you. More than that, God will change your status before Him forever. The Bible tells us that

**²¹ For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.
2 Corinthians 5:21 (ESV)**

God has done it all. There is only one thing God asks of you – He asks you to believe what He has done for you is true and receive it as the gift that it is. This is the greatest gift ever offered. Remember what Jesus said:

¹⁶...God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

John 3:16 (ESV)

Believing means putting your full confidence in Jesus. Believing means trusting in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus and nothing else, to make you right with God.

This Christmas, God wants to give you the gift of eternal life. Accept His gift today – trust in Jesus Christ as your Savior!