

**LIVING GODS WILL**

**Vessel of God**

**VIRGIN MARY**



**Michelangelo's Pietà, St. Peter's Basilica**

**Born:** 16 BC, Nazareth, Galilee

**Died:** 58 AD, (72 years old)

**Mary** was the mother of **Jesus**.

**Mary** was a virgin that God chose to have a miracle birth.

**Mary** was around **15 years old** when she gave birth to **Jesus**.

**Mary** the mother of Jesus was described by God as “**highly favored**” (**Luke 1:28**).

The phrase highly favored comes from a single Greek word, which essentially means “**much grace**.” **Mary** received God’s grace.

Grace is “**unmerited favor**”; that is, grace is a blessing we receive despite the fact that we do not deserve it. Mary needed grace from God and a Savior, just as the rest of us do.

**Mary** herself understood this fact, as she declared in **Luke 1:47**, “**My spirit rejoices in God my Savior.**”

The virgin **Mary**, by God’s grace, recognized that she needed the Savior. The Bible never says that **Mary** was anyone but an ordinary human whom God chose to use in an extraordinary way.

Yes, **Mary** was a righteous woman and favored (graced) by God (**Luke 1:27–28**). At the same time, **Mary** was a sinful human being who needed Jesus Christ as her Savior, just like everyone else (**Ecclesiastes 7:20; Romans 3:23; 6:23; 1 John 1:8**).

The virgin **Mary** did not have an “**immaculate conception**.” The Bible doesn’t suggest **Mary’s** birth was anything but a normal human birth.

**Mary** was a virgin when she gave birth to Jesus (**Luke 1:34–38**), but she was not a virgin permanently. The idea of the perpetual virginity of **Mary** is unbiblical.

**Matthew 1:25**, speaking of Joseph, declares, “**But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son. And he gave Him the name Jesus.**”

The word until clearly indicates that Joseph and **Mary** did have normal sexual relations after Jesus was born. **Mary** remained a virgin until the Savior’s birth, but later Joseph and **Mary** had several children together.

Jesus had four half-brothers: **James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas** (**Matthew 13:55**). Jesus also had half-sisters, although they are not named or numbered (**Matthew 13:55–56**).

God blessed and graced **Mary** by giving her several children, which in that culture was accepted as the clearest indication of God's blessing on a woman.

One time when Jesus was speaking, a woman in the crowd proclaimed, "**Blessed is the womb that bore You and the breasts at which You nursed**" (**Luke 11:27**). There was never a better opportunity for Jesus to declare that **Mary** was indeed worthy of praise and adoration.

What was Jesus' response? "**On the contrary, blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it**" (**Luke 11:28**). To Jesus, obedience to God's Word was more important than being the woman who gave birth to the Savior.

Nowhere in Scripture does Jesus or anyone else direct any praise, glory, or adoration toward **Mary**. Elizabeth, **Mary's** relative, praised **Mary** in **Luke 1:42-44**, but her praise is based on the blessing of giving birth to the Messiah.

It was not based on any inherent glory in **Mary**. In fact, after this **Mary** spoke a song of praise to the Lord, extoling His mindfulness to those of humble state and His mercy and faithfulness (**Luke 1:46-55**).

Many believe that **Mary** was one of Luke's sources for the writing of his Gospel (**Luke 1:1-4**). Luke records the angel **Gabriel** visiting **Mary** and telling her that she would give birth to a son who would be the Savior.

**Mary** was unsure how this could be since she was a virgin. When **Gabriel** told her that the child would be conceived by the Holy Spirit, **Mary** answered, "**I am the Lord's servant. May your word to me be fulfilled. Then the angel left her**" (**Luke 1:38**).

**Mary** responded with belief and a willingness to submit to God's plan. We, too, should have such faith in God and trustingly follow Him.

In describing the events of Jesus' birth and the response of those who heard the shepherds' message about Jesus, Luke writes, "**But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart**" (**Luke 2:19**).

When Joseph and **Mary** presented Jesus at the temple, Simeon recognized that Jesus was the Savior and gave God praise. Joseph and **Mary** marveled at what Simeon had said.

Simeon also told **Mary**, "**Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is opposed (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed**" (**Luke 2:34-35**).

Another time at the temple, when Jesus was twelve, **Mary** was upset that Jesus had remained behind when His parents had left for Nazareth. They were distressed in looking for Him. When they found Him, still in the temple, He said **He must be in His Father's house** (**Luke 2:49**).

Jesus returned to Nazareth with His earthly parents and submitted to them. We are told, again, that **Mary** "**treasured up all these things in her heart**" (**Luke 2:51**).

Raising Jesus must have been a perplexing endeavor yet also filled with precious moments, perhaps memories that became more poignant as **Mary** came to more fully understand who Jesus is. We, too, can treasure in our hearts the knowledge of God and the memories of His activity in our lives.

It was **Mary** who requested Jesus' intervention at the wedding of Cana, where He performed His first miracle and turned water into wine. Even though Jesus seemingly rebuffed her at first, **Mary** instructed the servants to do what He told them. She had faith in Him (**John 2:1–11**).

Later in Jesus' public ministry, His family grew concerned. **Mark 3:20–21** records, "**The crowd gathered again, so that they could not even eat. And when his family heard it, they went out to seize him, for they were saying, 'He is out of his mind.'**"

When His family arrived, Jesus proclaimed that it is **those who do the will of God who are His family**. Jesus' brothers did not believe in Him prior to the crucifixion, but at least two of them did afterward—**James and Jude** (Judas), the authors of the New Testament books bearing their names.

**Mary** did seem to believe in Jesus throughout His life. She was present at the cross when Jesus died (**John 19:25**), no doubt feeling the "**sword**" that Simeon had prophesied would pierce her soul.

It was there at the cross that Jesus asked John to serve as **Mary's** son, and John took **Mary** into his home (**John 19:26–27**). **Mary** was also with the apostles on the day of Pentecost (**Acts 1:14**). However, **Mary** is never mentioned again after **Acts** chapter 1.

The apostles did not give **Mary** a prominent role. **Mary's death is not recorded in the Bible**. Nothing is said about Mary ascending to heaven or having an exalted role there. As the earthly mother of Jesus, **Mary** should be respected, but she is not worthy of our worship or adoration.

### SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE

**Luke 1:26** Now in the sixth month the angel **Gabriel** was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, **27** to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was **Mary**.

**Luke 1:30** Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, **Mary**, for you have found favor with God. **31** And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name **Jesus**. **34** Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?" **35** And the angel answered and said to her, "The **Holy Spirit** will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the **Son of God**."



**The Assumption of the Virgin Mary by Peter Paul Rubens**