

## A Bible Study on Mary

Dr. Brant Pitre

### The First “Woman” of Creation: Queen Mother Eve (Genesis 1-3)

1. Some Characteristics of Eve
  - a. Created without Sin (along with Adam)
  - b. Queen over Creation (Gen 1:26-28)
  - c. Called “Woman” Before the Fall (Gen 2:22, 23, 3:2, 4, etc.)
  - d. Brought Death into the World (Sirach 25:24)
  - e. Named “Eve” (*havah*): “Mother of all the Living (*hayah*)” (Gen 3:20)
2. The Fall:
  - a. Characters: (1) an angel; (2) a woman; (3) a man
  - b. Woman “with” the Man brings death/suffering into the world (Gen 3:6)
3. The Future “Woman”: The *Protoevangelium* (Gen 3:15)
  - a. Enmity between the Serpent and “the Woman” (not Eve)
  - b. Enmity between the “seed” of Satan and “seed” of the Woman
  - c. Who Crushes the Serpent?
    1. The Woman (“*She* shall crush” Douay Rheims)
    2. Her Seed/Offspring (“*He* shall crush” NAB)
    3. Either Way: a *royal* action of Future King or Queen (Psalm 89:23; 110:1)

### The Annunciation and the Incarnation (Luke 1)

1. A virgin named Mary
  - a. Age: probably between 13 and 15 years of age
  - b. Status: betrothed (legally married) to Joseph of the “house of David”
  - c. “Mary” (Gk *mariam*; Hb *miriam*) after Miriam, sister of Moses
  - d. Meaning of Name: either “beloved of the Lord” or “Our Lady/Queen”
2. Gabriel’s Royal Greeting: “Hail, Full of Grace” (*chaire kecharitomene*)
  - a. Often Mistranslated: “Greetings, favored one” (NAB)
  - b. Royal Greeting + Title/Name: “Hail, King of the Jews” (John 19:3)
  - c. Literal Translation: “Hail, She Who Has Been Perfected by/Filled With Grace”  
(Compare St. Jerome: *Ave, gratia plena*)
3. The Dogma of the Immaculate Conception (CCC 490-493)
  - a. “Redeemed from the moment of her conception”
  - b. “Preserved Immune of all stain of original sin”
  - c. Related doctrine: Mary’s freedom from personal sin (493)
4. Mary’s Response: “How *shall* this be, since *I know not man*?” (Luke 1:34)
  - a. Often mistranslated: “How can this be, since I have no husband?” (RSV)
  - b. Presupposes a vow of virginity: she is already betrothed! (Luke 1:27)
5. The Incarnation: True God and True Man
  - a. Jesus is not only Son of David (“Son of the Most High”; cf. 2 Samuel 7)
  - b. He is also the divine “Son of God” (conceived by power of Holy Spirit)
6. Doctrine of Mary as the “Mother of God” (*Theotokos*) (CCC 495)
7. Mary’s Response: “Let it be done unto me according to Thy word” (Luke 1:38)
  - a. Mary, the Model of Christians: Total Submission to God’s Will
  - b. The New Eve: Death through Eve, Life through Mary (CCC 494)

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### Mary, the Ark of the New Covenant

#### Where is the Lost Ark of the Covenant?

It was also in the writing that the prophet, having received an oracle, ordered that the tabernacle and the ark should follow with him, and that he went out to the mountain where Moses had gone up and had seen the inheritance of God. And Jeremiah came and found a cave, and he brought there the tent and the ark and the altar of incense, and he sealed up the entrance. Some of those who followed him came up to mark the way, but could not find it. When Jeremiah learned of it, he rebuked them and declared: *“The place shall be unknown until God gathers his people together again and shows his mercy. And then the Lord will disclose these things, and the glory of the Lord and the cloud will appear, as they were shown in the case of Moses, and as Solomon asked that the place should be specially consecrated.”* (2 Maccabees 2:4-8)

#### The Location of the Ark Revealed

##### The Ark of the Old Covenant

The glory of the Lord and the cloud cover the Tabernacle (containing the Ark) and *“overshadow”* (*episkiazēn*) them (Exod 40:34-35, cf. v. 3)

David *“arose and went”* to the hill country of *Judah* to bring up *“the ark of God”* (2 Samuel 6:2)

David admits his unworthiness to receive the Ark by exclaiming: *“How can the ark of the Lord come to me?”* (2 Samuel 6:9)

David *“leaped”* before the Ark as it was brought in *“with shouting”* (2 Samuel 6:15-16)

The Ark remained in the hill country, in the house of Obed-Edom, for *“three months”* (2 Samuel 6:11)

##### Mary (Ark of the New Covenant)

The Holy Spirit comes upon Mary and the power of the Most High *“overshadows”* (*episkiasei*) her (Luke 1:35)

Mary *“arose and went”* into the hill country of *Judah* to visit Elizabeth (Luke 1:39)

Elizabeth admits her unworthiness to receive Mary by exclaiming: *“And why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?”* (Luke 1:43)

John *“leapt”* in Elizabeth’s womb at the sound of Mary’s voice and Elizabeth cried *“with a loud shout”*: *“Blessed are you among women, and blessed in the fruit of your womb!”* (Luke 1:41-42)

Mary remained in the hill country, in Elizabeth’s house, *“three months”* (Luke 1:56)

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### The Incarnation and the Virginité of Mary Revisited (Matthew 1)

1. Conception of Jesus: during “betrothal,” before they “came together” (Matt 1:18)
  - a. Joseph’s Freedom to Divorce in Old Covenant (see Deut 24:1-2)
  - b. Obligation to have an adulteress stoned to death (Deut 22:23-24)
  - c. Joseph’s Dream: the child is “conceived of the Holy Spirit” (Matt 1:20)
2. Fulfillment of Prophecy: “A Virgin (*parthenos*) shall conceive” (Isaiah 7:14)
3. Virginal Conception: neither “legend” nor “myth” (CCC 498)
4. Joseph “knew her not *until* she had borne a son” (Matt 1:25)
  - a. “Until” (*heos*) does *not* imply relations afterward (2 Sam 6:23; Mark 12:36)
5. Why was Jesus born of a Virgin? (CCC 502-507)
  - a. Manifest’s God’s “absolute initiative” in the Incarnation
  - b. Jesus’ Identity: truly Son of God the Father (“only-begotten Son” John 3:16)
  - c. Jesus is the New Adam that inaugurates the New Creation (cf. 1 Cor 15:45-47)
  - d. New Creation does not come about through sexual union (cf. John 1:13)
  - e. Spousal Character of Humanity with God is virginal (cf. 2 Cor 11:2)
  - f. Mary is an Archetype of the Church: both Virgin Bride and Fruitful Mother

### The Visitation and the *Magnificat* Revisited (Luke 1)

1. The Hail Mary: A Biblical Prayer
  - a. “Hail, *Mary*, Full of Grace, the Lord is with thee” (Gabriel, in Luke 1:28)
  - b. “Blessed, are thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, *Jesus*.” (Elizabeth, in Luke 1:42)
  - c. “Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the our of our death. Amen.” (compare Elizabeth in Luke 1:43)
2. Old Testament “Queen Mother” (*gebirah*) *second* only to King; royal *intercessor*  
So Bathsheba went to King Solomon, to speak to him on behalf of Adonijah. And the king rose to meet her, and *bowed down to her*; then he sat on his throne and *had a throne brought for the king’s mother*; and *she sat on his right*. Then she said, “I have one small request to make of you; do not refuse me.” And the king said to her, “Make you request, my mother; for I will not refuse you.” (1 Kings 2:19-20; compare 1 Kings 1:15-16; 15:1)
3. Queen Mother of the Kingdom of Christ:
  - a. God has “exalted” Mary to a “throne” (Luke 1:52)
  - b. Now “All generations shall call me Blessed” (compare Psalm 45:)  
[To the King:]  
I address my verses to the king...  
Your divine throne endures for ever and ever...  
Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your fellows...  
*At your right hand stands the Queen in gold of Ophir.*  
[To the Queen:]  
Hear, O Daughter, consider, and incline your ear...  
The people of Tyre will sue your favor with gifts...  
*I will cause your name to be celebrated in all generations,*  
therefore the peoples will praise you for ever and ever.  
(Psalm 45, 1, 6-7, 9, 10, 12, 17)

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### Mary during Jesus' Infancy and Childhood (Matthew 1; Luke 2)

1. The Journey to Bethlehem and the Birth of Jesus (Luke 2:1-21)
  - a. The difficulty of the journey and the birth for Mary
  - b. The Message of the Shepherds: the Messiah is born!
  - c. Mary's Response: "she kept all these things, *pondering them in her heart*" (Luke 1:29; 2:19; 2:51)
2. The Presentation in the Temple (Luke 2:22-38)
  - a. Mary's "Purification": 40 days of legal/ritual (not moral) impurity (Lev 12:1-8)
  - b. Mary follows the Mosaic Law like Jesus, even though sinless
  - c. The poverty of Saint Joseph and the Blessed Virgin: "a pair of turtledoves"
  - d. Simeon: First Prophecy of Crucifixion and Mary's Suffering with Christ

Behold, this child is set for the fall and rise of many in Israel,  
and for a sign which shall be contradicted.  
*And a sword will pierce your own soul too,  
that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.* (Luke 2:34-35)

3. King Herod and the Adoration of the Magi (Matt 2:1-12)
  - a. Probably much later: Joseph and Mary in a "house" (Matt 2:9)
  - b. They saw "the child with Mary his mother" and worshiped him
4. The Massacre of the Infants and the Flight to Egypt (Matt 2:13-23)
  - a. Mary's Suffering Continues: the Massacre of the Infants

The flight into Egypt and the massacre of the Infants manifest the opposition of darkness to the light... Christ's whole life as lived under the sign of persecution. *His own share it with him.* (CCC 530)

- c. Mary as Refugee: from one foreign place to another (Jews in Egypt)
5. Mary's Suffering Continues: the Finding of Jesus in the Temple (Luke 2:41-51)
  - a. Up to Jerusalem for the Feast of Passover
  - b. Jesus the Young Man: 12 Years of Age (*bar-mitzvah*)
  - c. Shadow of the Cross: Mary Loses Jesus for *Three Days*
  - d. Mary's Anxiety (Luke 2:48)
  - e. Mary's Contemplation: She "Kept all these things in her hear" (Luke 2:51)
  - f. Jesus honored Mary and was obedient to her (Luke 2:52)  
"Honor (*kabodah*) thy father and thy mother" (Exod 20:12)  
Whoever *glorifies his mother* is like one who lays up treasure." (Sir 3:4)

### 6. The Hidden Life of the Holy Family

During the greater part of his life Jesus shared the condition of the vast majority of human being: a daily life spent without evident greatness, a life of manual labor... *Mary "kept all these things in her heart" during the years Jesus remained hidden in the silence of an ordinary life.* (CCC 531-34)

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### The Wedding at Cana (John 2:1-12)

1. Mary's Role as Intercessor and Advocate: "They have no wine" (CCC 968-69)
2. The New Eve: The "Woman" (John 2:4)
3. Jesus' Response: not disrespect, but a Hebrew idiom (Luke 8:28; cf. Exod 20:12)
4. Jesus' Response: "My *hour* has not yet come":
  - a. The "hour" of the Cross (John 12:23-26)
  - b. The "hour" of the Wine of the Eucharist (John 13:1; John 4:21-23)

### The "Mother and Brothers" of Jesus (Matt 13:53-58)

1. The Perpetual Virginity of Mary (CCC 499) (SEE BACK)

### Mary at the Foot of the Cross (John 19:25-26)

1. Jesus' Seamless Garment: the linen ephod of the High Priest (*b. Yoma* 3.47)
2. Jesus' Gives Mary to be Our Mother
  - a. "Woman, behold your son" (the Beloved Disciple)
  - b. "*Behold your mother*": the Motherhood of Mary and the Cross (CCC 964)
3. Mary's Participation in the Cross (cf. Col 1:24)

The cross is the unique sacrifice of Christ, the "one mediator between God and men." But because in his incarnate divine person he has in some way united himself to every man, "the possibility of being made partners, in a way known to God, in the paschal mystery" is offered to all men. He calls his disciples to "take up [their] cross and follow [him]..." In fact Jesus desires to associate with his redeeming sacrifice those who were to be its first beneficiaries. *This is achieved supremely in the case of his mother, who was associated more intimately than any other person in the mystery of his redemptive suffering.* "Apart from the cross, there is no other ladder by which we may get to heaven." (CCC 618)

### Mary, Mother of the Church (Acts 2)

1. Prayer "with Mary" at the Beginning of the Church (Acts 2:14)
2. Devotion to Mary: "Devotion" (*dulia*) not "adoration" (*latria*) (CCC 970-971)

### The Woman Clothed with the Sun (Revelation 12)

1. Mary, Ark of the New Covenant (Rev 11:19-12:1)
2. Mary, Queen of Heaven and Earth (Rev 12:1-2)
3. Mary, Suffering Mother of the Messiah (Rev 12:1-6; cf. John 16:21-22)
4. Mary, the New Eve: three individuals
  - a. The Dragon: Satan, "that ancient serpent" (Rev 12:9)
  - b. The Child: Jesus
  - c. The Woman: Mary
5. Mary, Mother of the Church (Rev 12:17)
6. The Bodily Assumption of Mary into Heaven (CCC 966; 1950 Pius XII)
  - a. Taken up body and soul into heaven
  - b. Exalted as "Queen over all things"
  - c. Singular Participation in the Resurrection
  - d. Anticipation of the bodily resurrection of other Christians (CCC 972)
  - e. The Ark "ascends" into Heaven with the Messiah (Psalm 132:8-10)

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### The Perpetual Virginity of Mary: the Biblical Evidence

1. The Bible *nowhere* calls any other person than Jesus a son or daughter of Mary.
2. Mary's response to the angel *while betrothed to Joseph* makes no sense unless she has taken some vow of virginity (Luke 1:27).

And Mary said to the angel, "How *shall* this be, since *I know not man?*" (Luke 1:34)  
(Gk *pos estai touto, epei andra ou ginosko;*)

All the angel has told her at this point is that she would conceive and bear a child; there is no reason for her to wonder how this would take place if she, as a betrothed woman, had any plans of having marital relations with Joseph.

3. The Greek word "until" (*heos*) in Matthew's statement that Joseph "knew not" Mary "until she had borne her son" (Matt 1:25) *does not imply a change afterward*. For example:

And Michal, the daughter of Saul, had not child *until* (Gk *heos*) the day of her death. (2 Sam 6:23 LXX).

The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand, *until* (Gk *heos*) I put your enemies under your feet." (Mark 12:36)

4. James and Joseph, called the "brothers" (Gk *adelphoi*) of Jesus (Matt 13:55), are later explicitly identified as the sons of a woman called "*the other Mary*" and "Mary, the mother of James and Joseph" (Matt 27:56, 61), who was present at Jesus' crucifixion.
5. This "other Mary" is present at the foot of the Cross in John's Gospel as well, where she is explicitly identified as the Virgin Mary's "sister" (Gk *adelphes*) (John 19:25). This key verse demonstrates two important points:

- a. The Greek word for "sister" (*adelphē*) or "brother" (*adelphos*) *can* be used to refer to a close relative or cousin who is not a uterine brother or sister, as is often the case in the Greek Old Testament (see Gen 13:8; 14:16; CCC 500)

- b. This verse *explains why* James and Joseph are called Jesus' "brothers" in Matthew's Gospel; they are apparently *the sons of his mother's "sister"*: i.e., they are his *cousins*.

6. Jesus' entrustment of Mary to John the Apostle, the son of Zebedee, is *totally inconceivable* if he were survived by other children of Mary, especially if they were sons of hers:

When Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing near, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, you son!" Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home. (John 19:26)

7. The Perpetual Virginity of Mary is *de fide* Catholic doctrine (CCC 499, note 154)