

# ***The Virgin Mary***

## ***“Highly Favored”***

(Luke 1:26-37)

**M**ary, the mother of Jesus, has great attraction for Baptists, and for Christians of every name, and not only for people who wrongfully worship and petition her. For a few weeks, we will study what the Bible says about her, and pray for the Lord to let her life affect ours. Mary's story in chronological order can be followed by reading these scriptures in this order: Luke 1:26-56; Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 2:1-38; Matthew 2:1-23; Luke 2:39-52; John 2:1-12; Mark 3:31-35; John 19:25-27; Acts 1:10-14. We will confine our study this time primarily to the record given us by Luke.

### **Chosen By Grace.**

The “*sixth month*” mentioned in Luke 1:26 means the sixth month of Elisabeth's pregnancy (See vs. 5-25). Her son was John the Baptist, the great forerunner of Christ and final prophet of the old era. Verse 36 says that Elisabeth was the “*cousin*” of Mary, and she was (according to verse 13) the wife of Zacharias the priest. In the sixth month of Elisabeth's pregnancy with John, Mary her cousin received a visit from the angel Gabriel who addressed her this way:

*“Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.”* (Luke 1:28)

What did he mean by this salutation? Mary wondered this very thing (v. 29). One thing that she understood, but we might not, was the meaning of “*highly favored*.” In the Greek language which was used to write the original manuscript of the Book of Luke, this term is one word that is based on the word for “*grace*.” That root word is the same one translated “*grace*” in Romans 3:24, Romans 4:4, Ephesians 2:8-9, and Titus 3:3-7 (Read these passages). The angel said that Mary was “*highly graced*.” In verse 30, he told her that she had “*found favor with God*.” The word for “*favor*” here means “*grace*” so that she was told she had found “*grace with God*.” The idea of the grace of God is always His unmerited, unearned, and undeserved favor. Some have said that God's grace involves God giving us good things we don't deserve, while God's mercy is God not giving us bad things we do deserve! Mary was a woman who was highly favored by God in spite of the fact that she did not deserve His kindness. This is something Mary knew from what Gabriel said in Luke 1:28 and 30. She expressed her understanding of God's grace in her life in verses 46-48. She did not earn or deserve the privilege of being the mother of God's Son. Of course this means, among other things, that Mary was not

sinless or perfect. We can see in verse 47 that Mary needed a Savior just as all sinners do. Undoubtedly she was a good woman by human standards, but she was not some kind of goddess or co-redeemer with Christ. She was chosen by the sovereign grace of God, and not because of some unique quality in her. She certainly had not been born through an “immaculate conception.” She was human as we are, but she had been chosen to fulfill the greatest role that any woman could ever have. I Timothy 2:13-15 says,

*“For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing . . .”*

The role of the woman in the salvation of mankind would be in bearing a Child. When Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, they were told that a Savior would come who would be the “Seed” of a woman. The Lord said to the devil,

*“And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”* (Genesis 3:15)

Satan would bruise the “heel” of the Savior, but He would strike a fatal blow to the devil’s “head.” He was going to be the woman’s “Seed.” Isaiah 7:14 (Look it up) explains that the Savior would be “God with us” (the meaning of Immanuel) and that he would be born of a virgin woman. You see, God was going to provide us with a Savior, and in His grace this Savior would be a *man* born of a *woman*. So when the angel said, “*Blessed art thou among women*” he meant that Mary was chosen to be blessed above all women by becoming the virgin-mother of the Savior! And she was chosen by the *grace* (unmerited favor) of God. Christians are taught to think of themselves as chosen by the grace of God, too. See this in Ephesians 1:3-6 and II Thessalonians 2:13-14. God in His omniscience and His omnipotence has seen us in His Son from all eternity, and we are elect in Him! Let’s all thank God for His grace!

### **Blessed By Grace.**

The particular blessing Mary was to receive is described in Luke 1:31-35. It was the miracle of the virgin birth of Christ. See in it the involvement of all three Persons of the Trinity: the Father (v. 32), the Son (v. 35), and the Holy Ghost (v. 35). Through His miraculous birth, Jesus became a member of the human race, but He did not inherit a sinful nature from Adam. Notice the names He is given: “*JESUS*” (v. 31); “*Son of the Highest*” (v. 32); Son of David (vs. 32-33); and “*the Son of God*” (vs. 34-35). Jesus means “Jehovah saves.” Her fiancé Joseph was also told to call the baby “Jesus” (Matthew 1:21), and he was promised that the child “*shall save his people from their sins.*” On the divine side through His virgin birth, Jesus was the Son of the Highest, the Son of God. John 10:24-33 (Read this passage carefully) makes it clear that to be the Son of God is to be Deity! God is Three in One: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Jesus, the Son of God, was God in the flesh (See also John 1:1 and 14, as well as I Timothy 3:16). As Son of David, He is to be King of Israel and ruler of the earth. He will assume this position when He comes the second time. The first time, He came to save us from our

sins. He died for us on the cross and rose again so that our salvation could be accomplished! Mary was made part of all this by being the vessel through which the Savior came into the world! It is a miracle of grace when any of us is used of God to bring His salvation to men! Notice what verses 36 and 37 say about miracles. By the grace of God, you and I can also be used for the miracle of saving lost souls. See this in I Corinthians 9:22 and James 5:20.

### **Saved By Grace.**

Mary was an obedient Israelite and a good woman, but she was saved from her sins in the same way we are. As we have noticed in Luke 1:47, she needed a Savior, too. God was her Savior, as He is ours. Look at these verses from I Timothy:

*“ . . . God our Savior, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope . . . ” (1:1)*

*“ . . . God our Savior . . . will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth . . . there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all . . . ” (2:3-6)*

God the Father loved us, and devised the plan of salvation. God the Son loved us, and executed the Father's plan by dying for our sins. God the Holy Spirit completed the plan by raising the Son from the dead and applying this salvation to individual lives. One of those lives was Mary's, who trusted in God for her salvation from sin.