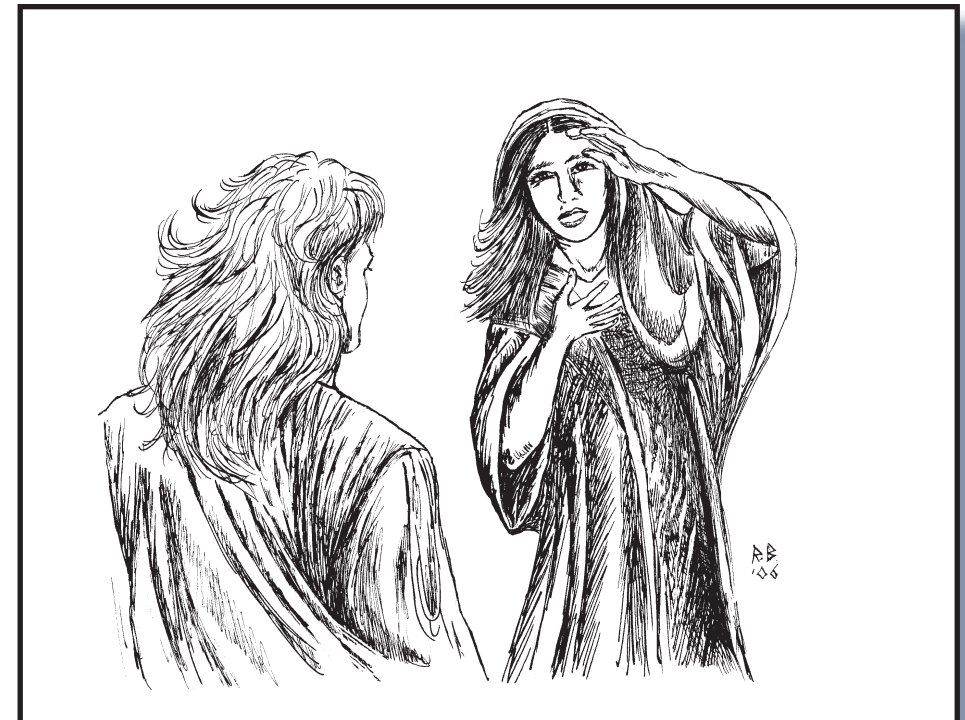


MARY

THE MOTHER OF JESUS



BIBLE STUDY GUIDE SERIES



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CHRIST TO THE WORLD MINISTRIES



CHRIST TO THE WORLD MINISTRIES
THE LIFE OF CHRIST SERIES
BIBLE STUDY GUIDE NO 1

MARY
THE MOTHER OF JESUS

Christ to the World Ministries is a nonprofit ministry dedicated to sharing the gospel of Christ with the world through radio dramas and printed and oral studies based on Scripture. The printed lessons can be studied by one person or by a group.

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Dear Friend,

I am glad that you are interested in studying the Bible. It is God's Word to us and in it, we find the way of salvation and guidance for daily living. The main theme of the Bible is God's love for us and how He expressed that love by Jesus Christ dying on the cross for our sins. Jesus arose from the grave and today He will save every person who puts his or her faith and trust in Him.

This study guide will help you gain a better understanding of the Bible. Open your heart to what God has for you through the study. I have prayed that your study will be life changing.

May God bless you richly,

Larry Alston
Christ to the World Ministries



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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to a study about the life of Jesus. The coming of Jesus Christ to earth and his ministry is the central and most important event of all time. All of history before had led up to it, and

everything that has happened afterward is connected with it. Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God. He came to earth and was born as a baby. He lived a perfect life without sin. He died on the cross for the sins of the world. He was buried but on the third day arose from the dead and is alive forever more. He ascended back into heaven and one day will return to earth. A person can receive forgiveness of sins and eternal life by trusting him.

An entire series of study guides is devoted to the life of Jesus. This study guide is the first in the series and is about Mary, the mother of Jesus. God chose a young Jewish maiden from an obscure village in Galilee to be the mother of his Son. Mary was a virgin whose life was characterized by faith and deep humility. This study will help you understand how God prepared for the coming of his Son into the world. The study demonstrates that nothing is impossible with God.

You can write in this study guide. Don't keep it clean and unmarked! When the guide asks you to respond, don't simply think of your response. Take time to write it down. Doing so helps internalize and reinforce your learning. Write from your heart. No one else will see what you write.

As writer, I will work along with you as you complete your study. I will share with you my own responses to most of the questions and activities. This does not mean that my responses are any more correct than yours; it simply means that you will have the benefit of a fellow traveler walking beside you as you move through the study.

Keep your Bible before you as you complete the study. When asked to read a passage of Scripture, take time to read it.

Ready? Then let's get started.

Begin your study with prayer. Make the following prayer your very own.

Dear God, please open your Word to me as I study. Speak to my heart. Help me obey your will for my life. Help me do what you want me to do. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

THE SCRIPTURE

Luke 1:26-56

26 In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, 27 to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. 28 The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

29 Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. 30 But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. 31 You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, 33 and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

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

35 The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. 36 Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. 37 For nothing is impossible with God."

38 "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said." Then the angel left her.

39 At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, 40 where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. 41 When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. 42 In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! 43 But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? 44 As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. 45 Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished.

46 And Mary said:

"My soul glorifies the Lord 47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior. 48 for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed.

49 for the Mighty One has done great things for me—holy is his name. 50 His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation.

51 He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. 52 He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. 53 He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty.

54 He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful 55 to Abraham and his descendants forever, even as he said to our fathers."

56 Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about three months and then returned home.

God created the universe. He created the heavenly host, called angels. He created the heavens and the earth. He made the rivers and the mountains and the trees and the fishes and the birds and the animals of the forests. Then he made humankind. He created our very first parents, Adam and Eve. Satan, an angel that rebelled against God, led Eve to disobey God and sin. Adam also sinned. From that point on, sin affected the entire human family. But God was not caught off guard. He was not surprised. From the very beginning, the Son of God volunteered to provide redemption and be the Savior of Adam's fallen race.

BACKGROUND

The Old Testament is the record of God preparing the world for the coming of his Son to be the Savior. After Adam and Eve, and over many generations, the human race became increasingly sinful until God destroyed the world with a flood. Only Noah and his family were saved through an ark God told Noah to build. The descendants of Noah repeated the pattern of turning away from God.

Then God called one man, Abraham, through whom the Messiah, or Savior, would come. Abraham was the father of the Hebrew or Jewish people. From Genesis 12 through the rest of the Old Testament, we find the record of God working with this family to prepare for the coming of his Son. Abraham's son Isaac was the father of Jacob. After an experience with an angel, God gave Jacob the name Israel. Jacob, or Israel, had twelve sons. The other brothers hated their brother Joseph, and sold him into slavery. Joseph rose to be second in command in the land of Egypt because of his faithfulness to God and his trust in him. A famine led the entire family of Jacob to go to Egypt to live. There the children of Israel multiplied until they became a threat to a new Pharaoh, many years after Joseph had died and was no longer remembered. The children of Israel became slaves and spent many years building cities for the king.

God heard the cries and prayers of his people and called Moses to deliver them from slavery and lead them to their homeland, the land of Canaan. The exodus from Egypt marked a pivotal event for the people. God gave them the Ten Commandments and other laws and regulations on how to conduct their lives. After 40 years of wandering in the wilderness the people entered the Promised Land under Joshua and conquered the land.

A long dark period of time went by characterized by a number of recurring cycles. The people turned away from God; judgment in the form of oppression from other nations came upon them; the people cried out unto God; and God raised up judges to deliver the people. The period of the judges ended with the desire of the people for a king to rule over them.

Number the following items in the correct time sequence. The first one is indicated for you.

- _____ the call of Abraham
- _____ the exodus from Egypt
- 1 God created the universe
- _____ the call of Moses
- _____ Noah and the flood
- _____ Jacob
- _____ the judges of Israel
- _____ Joseph
- _____ Adam and Eve

Check your answers by reading again the preceding paragraphs.

Saul became the first king, followed by David, who reigned around 1000 B.C. David was a great king, and God promised that the Messiah would come from his family line. Upon David's death, his son Solomon reigned. Solomon built a great temple for God. When Solomon died, the kingdom divided and became two nations, Israel in the north and Judah in the south. Both nations turned away from God and went their own way into sin and idolatry.

Prophets called for the people to return to God, but for the most part the people did not listen to nor heed their call. The northern kingdom Israel fell to the mighty nation of Assyria in 722 B.C. and the people were carried away into captivity. The Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar conquered Judah in three successive waves in 605, 598 and 587 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the glorious temple built by Solomon. The people of the southern kingdom were carried away into captivity also. Seventy years later, Cyrus, the king of the Persian Empire, permitted the Jews to return to their homeland. A remnant returned and rebuilt the temple. The Old Testament closes around 425 B.C. with the prophet Malachi announcing that the prophet Elijah would come and announce the coming of the Messiah.

The Interbiblical Period between the Old and New Testaments seemed to be a time when God did not speak. No prophet arose to guide the people. Yet there remained alive the hope that one day God would send the Messiah to save his people. The Persian period of rule ended with the rise of Alexander from Greece around 330 B.C. When Alexander died a few years later, his generals divided the vast kingdom he had conquered. Israel first came under the control of Egypt, followed by Syrian rule. Antiochus IV from Syria desecrated the temple and offered swine on a pagan altar erected inside the temple. The Maccabean family led the Jews to revolt in 167 B.C. and for about 100 years the people enjoyed a measure of independence. Rome took control of the country in 63 B.C. Herod, appointed by the Romans to be king over Judea in 37 B.C., conducted expansive building programs, including the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem. But the Jews detested Herod. It seemed as though God had forgotten his people. Still, the hope for a Messiah lingered in the hearts of many people. God had promised. Would God keep his promise?

And then God sent his angel Gabriel to a young girl in a small village in Galilee to announce that the time had come for the birth of the Messiah, the Savior.

Number the following items in the correct time sequence. Number them to follow the nine items in the list above. The first one is indicated for you. Place “11” for the next item, and so on.

- ___ the Interbiblical Period
- ___ David
- 10 Saul
- ___ Solomon
- ___ Roman rule
- ___ the kings of Judah and Israel
- ___ the kingdom divided
- ___ the fall of the nation Israel
- ___ the fall of the nation Judah

Check your answers by reading again the preceding paragraphs.

Read Galatians 4:4-5: *“But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law.”*

These verses indicate that: **(Check the correct answer)**

- ___ God controls history, and his Son came at just the right time.
- ___ God controls history, but did not know when his Son would come.
- ___ God does not control history, and had to wait to send his Son.

These verses also indicate that: **(Check the correct answer.)**

- ___ Jesus came to overthrow the oppressive Roman government.
- ___ Jesus came to redeem us.
- ___ Jesus came to do away with the law.

God waited long centuries before sending his Son into the world. But he controls history, and his Son came at just the right time. Jesus came to redeem us.

THE ANNOUNCEMENT TO MARY OF THE BIRTH OF JESUS

The great moment for which the people of God had been waiting for hundreds of years finally arrived. The Messiah was ready to come, the King of kings and Lord of lords. Would God send his angel Gabriel to Jerusalem to announce the birth of the Savior to some princess? No. Gabriel came to a peasant girl from a small town in Galilee engaged to be married to the village carpenter.



The young girl Mary lived in the small village of Nazareth. Not even mentioned in the Old Testament, Nazareth is about 80 miles north of Jerusalem and about 15 miles west of the Sea of Galilee. The town is perched on a hillside overlooking the broad plain of Jezreel or Esdraelon. The historic mountains of Tabor and Carmel are nearby and Hermon's snow-clad peak can be seen far to the north. The great highway from Egypt to Damascus could be seen from the town as it wound through the valley. Merchant caravans and legions of Roman soldiers could often be seen on the road. To this Galilean village the angel Gabriel came to announce to Mary that she had been chosen to give birth to the Savior. In this village Jesus afterwards spent his childhood and grew to manhood.

Mary, though unmarried, was engaged to a man named Joseph. An engagement in that culture consisted of a legal contract, as binding as marriage itself. An engagement was arranged by a father seeking a wife for his son and the father of the bride. Girls as young as 13 or 15 were customarily engaged to be married. The engagement period usually lasted a year. At the end of that time the couple came together as husband and wife.



Read Luke 1:29. Write in your own words in the space beside the picture above Mary's response to the appearance of the angel.

Gabriel's appearance and greeting startled Mary. The angel hastened to reassure her and tell her that she was highly favored by God. The angel explained that Mary had been chosen by God to give birth to the Son of God. Mary questioned the angel's announcement and asked how it could be possible since she was a virgin and had never been intimate with a man. Gabriel told her that the Holy Spirit would come upon her and make it possible for her to conceive a child. To reassure Mary, Gabriel informed her that her relative Elizabeth, who had been barren many years, was going to have a child in her old age, and even now was in her sixth month of pregnancy. The angel assured the young maiden, "Nothing is impossible with God" (Luke 1:37). Mary humbly and unconditionally accepted the angel's announcement.



Read Luke 1:38. Write in your own words what Mary told the angel.

Read again Luke 1:26-38. Make a list of everything you can discover about Mary from these verses.

Mary was a young virgin who lived in the town of Nazareth in Galilee. She was engaged to marry Joseph. The angel Gabriel appeared to her and told her she would give birth to the Son of God. Overwhelmed by the announcement, nevertheless Mary accepted the news as an obedient servant of God.

In Luke 1:31-33, 35 the angel describes the son to be born to Mary. Read these verses and write at least six things you can discover about him.

We can learn many things about Jesus from this passage. The child will be given the name Jesus. He will be great. He will be called the Son of the Most High. He will be given the throne of David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever. His kingdom will never end. He is a holy one. He is the Son of God.

MARY'S VISIT TO ELIZABETH



Mary took the hint from Gabriel that she should visit her relative Elizabeth, wife of the aged priest Zechariah. She hurried and made the four or five day trip to the hill country of Judea, probably to a village south of Jerusalem. Mary no doubt felt a kinship to Elizabeth closer than blood since both of them had been miraculously blessed by God. She would find in Elizabeth an understanding person she could confide in and one who would provide her with counsel.



Read Luke 1:41. What two things happened to Elizabeth when Mary greeted her?

When Mary greeted her aged relative, the baby in Elizabeth’s womb leaped for joy, as though to salute the Son of God who had been conceived in Mary’s womb by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit filled Elizabeth. The Spirit of God gave Elizabeth spiritual insight, and she recognized Mary as the mother of the promised Redeemer. She cried out with a loud, Spirit-filled voice. She pronounced a blessing upon Mary and also a blessing upon the baby in Mary’s womb. She acknowledged Mary as the mother of her Lord.

Why do you think Elizabeth recognized immediately that Mary was pregnant with the Son of God? Check the correct response.

- Mary told her all that happened as soon as she arrived.
- Elizabeth possessed a perceptivity that came with age.
- The Holy Spirit revealed the information to Elizabeth.

Elizabeth had learned to trust God. No doubt she and her husband had prayed for many years for a child. However, her barrenness did not sap her faith. When finally Gabriel told Zechariah that his wife would conceive in her old age and bear a son who would be a forerunner of the Messiah, God rewarded her faithfulness. Elizabeth walked daily with God. The Holy Spirit revealed to her that her relative Mary would give birth to the Messiah.

MARY’S SONG OF PRAISE

After Elizabeth blessed Mary, the young virgin burst out in a song of praise to God (Luke 1:46-55). The words of Mary are strongly reminiscent of Hannah’s song of praise after God answered her prayer and gave her Samuel (1 Sam. 2:1-10). Mary’s song is filled with at least 15 quotations or references to the Old Testament. This shows the reverence and love for the Word of God in Mary’s home and in the home where Jesus grew up.

In the first part of the song, Mary gave praise to God for what he had done for her (Luke 1:46-49). Then she sang about God and his greatness and mercy. She sang of the difference between the world's view of greatness and God's view (Luke 1:50-53). She closed with a summary of God's mercy to Israel (Luke 1:54-55).

Read Luke 1:46-49. Write the four names Mary used for God in these verses.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Read Luke 1:50-53. Write in your own words what God has done for each of the following groups of people:

Those who fear him _____

The proud _____

Rulers _____

The humble _____

The hungry _____

The rich _____

Mary referred to God as Lord, God my Savior, the Mighty One, and holy. In singing about the world's view of greatness and God's view, Mary said that God would extend his mercy to those who fear him. He would scatter the proud and bring down rulers. He would lift up the humble. He would feed the hungry, but turn the rich away empty.

MARY'S THREE MONTHS WITH ELIZABETH

Luke writes: "*Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about three months and then returned home*" (Luke 1:56). Would it not be wonderful to have a recording of all the conversations between the two women during those three months? Their conversations would make a most interesting book. And to think, that all the while, poor Zechariah had to stand by silently while the women talked! Gabriel had rendered him unable to talk until the birth of their son John because he did not believe the angel's words. He had to take part in the conversation with his writing tablet. They likely spent their time meditating, talking, and rejoicing over the miraculous work of God in their lives.



Obviously Mary was raised in a devout home where the Word of God was studied and memorized. Elizabeth and Zechariah knew God’s commandments and Old Testament scripture. Zechariah most likely owned some Old Testament scrolls. They surely poured over the Word of God during those three months. No doubt many of their conversations traced the work of God in preparing the world for the coming of the Messiah. They probably talked about how God created the universe and then made Adam and Eve. They may have pondered the words of the first Messianic promise when God spoke to the serpent after he had beguiled the woman: *“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel”* (Gen. 3:15).

They may have remembered the great flood and how God saved Noah and his family. They probably spent much time discussing the history of their people, including the thrilling stories of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and Moses. They could have traced the hand of God in their history, including the exodus from Egypt, the period of the judges, and the kings and the prophets. Perhaps Zechariah showed them the prophecy of Isaiah: *“The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call his name Immanuel”* (Isaiah 7:14). They likely sang together from the Hebrew Psalms.

We can be certain that Elizabeth told Mary the details of what happened to Zechariah in the temple. Zechariah with his writing tablet and marker surely helped tell the story!

Read Luke 1:5-25 for the account of what happened to Zechariah and Elizabeth six months before Mary’s visit. Then answer these questions.

1. Who appeared to Zechariah as he served in the temple? _____

2. What did the angel announce to Zechariah? _____

3. What would be the name of the baby? _____

4. Why did Zechariah disbelieve the angel’s announcement? _____

5. What punishment did the angel give Zechariah for his unbelief? _____

The angel Gabriel appeared to the priest Zechariah one day as he served in the temple. The angel told him that he and his wife would have a son and they were to name the baby “John”. In adulthood this child would be known as John the Baptist. Zechariah did not believe the announcement because he and Elizabeth were old. Gabriel told Zechariah he would be unable to speak until the birth of the child.

Mary returned to her home in Nazareth just before John was born. Knowing that the birth of the baby would be a big event and many people would gather, Mary probably preferred not to be there at that time.

As Mary made the long journey back to Nazareth, she likely thought of problems she would face when she got home.

Place a check beside each of the following problems that possibly awaited Mary when she got home.

____ Joseph not understanding and thinking the worst

____ Joseph breaking their engagement

____ Mary’s family not understanding

____ the public stigma and scandal of an unwed pregnancy

____ gossip on the part of the people in her town

____ a public stoning

Quite likely, all of the problems above, with the exception of a public stoning, awaited Mary when she arrived home. (Mosaic law commanded stoning for an engaged maiden found to be sexually unfaithful, along with the man who sinned with her. By New Testament times, however, authorities did not follow this practice.) Her absence for three months and then returning pregnant would only heighten the misunderstanding and ugly gossip. But Mary had complete trust in God. She gladly accepted the role God had chosen for her, whatever the consequences.

As Mary walked home, she pondered everything that had happened. No doubt she wondered about the future. She wondered what God had in store for her and the baby in her womb. Little did she know that in six months she would be making this long journey again, this time to the little town of Bethlehem, and accompanied by her husband. As she walked up the hill into the village of Nazareth, she knew the future was in God's hands. And she knew also that she had placed her own life in his hands. Mary was ready.

Now that we have studied about Mary, the mother of Jesus, let's summarize the lesson and make application of its truths to our own life.

APPLICATION

Refer to the two activities in the "Background" section and write the 18 events or items in the correct time sequence. The first one is written for you.

1. God created the universe
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____

12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____
16. _____
17. _____
18. _____

These items give a very brief summary of the Old Testament and the Inter-biblical Period. Using these items as cues, tell the story of the Old Testament aloud in your own words. Practice this until you are able to tell the story to someone else.

The Old Testament shows that God worked through history over many centuries to prepare the world for the coming of his Son.

Looking back on your life, can you discern ways God has worked in your life, possibly in ways of which you were not aware at the time? If so, describe one of those times or ways. _____

Study for a few minutes the six drawings in this lesson. Write beside each drawing a sentence that describes the situation pictured.

Using the six drawings as cues, write in your own words a brief summary of this lesson. Do not refer to Luke 1 as you do this.

Now check what you wrote by reading Luke 1:26-56. Make any changes you like in your summary above.

The angel Gabriel told Mary that God highly favored her (Luke 1:30). In a unique sense she was a divinely favored or blessed person.

Think of two ways God has blessed your life. Write them here:

1. _____
2. _____

It may seem strange that God would choose a young girl from an obscure village to give birth to his Son, our Savior. However, *“Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart”* (1 Samuel 16:7).

What do you think God saw when he looked at Mary’s heart?

Mary was not sinless. She trusted God to save her. She referred to God as her *“Savior”* (Luke 1:47). But I think that when God looked at her heart he saw love and obedience and submissiveness. He saw her desire to serve him. He saw her strong faith and deep humility. He saw her willingness to commit her way to him, trusting him, knowing that he would do whatever was best.

What do you think God sees when he looks at your heart? Examine the following list and place a check beside each item you think God sees in your heart.

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> love | <input type="checkbox"/> bitterness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> hurt | <input type="checkbox"/> trust |
| <input type="checkbox"/> faith | <input type="checkbox"/> loneliness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> obedience | <input type="checkbox"/> emptiness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> submissiveness | <input type="checkbox"/> humility |
| <input type="checkbox"/> anger | <input type="checkbox"/> fear |

Examine again the list above. This time circle each item that you would like for God to see in your heart.

Read Luke 1:37. Spend a few minutes thinking about the verse. Write the verse here: _____

How did the verse relate to Zechariah and Elizabeth? _____

How did the verse relate to Mary? _____

The aged priest and his wife had a son. The young virgin gave birth to Jesus.

Like Zechariah and Elizabeth, Abraham and Sarah were very old and without children. When the angel of the Lord told Abraham that they would have a son, Sarah did not believe. The angel asked, “Is anything too hard for the Lord” (Genesis 18:14)? Centuries later the prophet Jeremiah answered that question: “Ah, Sovereign Lord, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you” (Jeremiah 32:17). Gabriel answered it too, when he told Mary: “For nothing is impossible with God” (Luke 1:37).

Spend a few minutes thinking about the biggest problems or needs in your life. Write two of the problems or needs here:

1. _____
2. _____

Think about these two problems or needs in relation to the verses above (Luke 1:37, Gen. 18:14, Jeremiah 32:17). Now spend a few minutes in prayer, committing these problems and needs to God.

Write in large letters over the two problems or needs you identified above, these words: **FOR NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE WITH GOD.**

In writing a job application or resume, a person writes good things about himself to cause the prospective employer to think highly of him.

If you were writing a job resume of yourself for God, what would be the two very best things you would say about yourself? Write them here:

1. _____
2. _____

Read Luke 1:38. Mary’s job resume would read: “I am available. I am willing to serve.”

Read Luke 1:48. Supply the missing word in the following sentence.
Mary said, “From now on all generations will call me _____.”

Mary stands out as the woman most blessed by God. From among all women God chose her to be the one through whom he would bring the Messiah into the world. Mary said that all generations would call her blessed. Mary did not say this because of any personal worth or holiness on her part, but because of her role in giving birth to the Christ-child.

Many false beliefs and teachings abound concerning Mary. These false beliefs include the teaching that Mary herself was born without original sin, a doctrine called the “immaculate conception.” Many people teach that Mary remained a virgin all of her life and never had any more children after Jesus, a teaching called “perpetual virginity.” Many believe Mary went to heaven without dying, a teaching called the “bodily assumption.” Some teach that Mary is full of gifts of grace and appears between God and man as mediator to dispense grace. They look to her in the role of mediator and pray to her. They consider her as more sympathetic than Christ and easier to approach. Scripture does not support any of these teachings; they are all false.

Define the following false beliefs in your own words.

Immaculate conception _____
Perpetual virginity _____
Bodily assumption _____
Role of mediator _____

Check your work with the previous paragraph.

We discover an important truth in the first two chapters of Luke:

GOD KEEPS HIS WORD. HE DOES WHAT HE SAYS HE WILL DO.

Discover this truth by reading the following verses and completing the chart:

	What God promised	What happened
Luke 1:13	_____	Luke 1:57 _____
Luke 1:31	_____	Luke 2:7 _____

We can be certain that God does what he says he will do. We can trust God to keep all of his promises. God promised a son to Zechariah and Elizabeth; John was born. God promised that Mary would give birth to Jesus; Jesus was born.

Some of God’s promises are for everyone; some of his promises are for persons who are trusting Jesus Christ. Some of God’s promises are unconditional; some of his promises are conditional upon us doing something.

The verses below contain some promises of God. Each verse consists of two parts. God says that if we will do something, then he will do something. Read each verse and fill in the blanks. The first one is completed for you.

John 3:16 *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”*

Our part: Believe in God’s Son _____

What God has promised: We will not perish but have eternal life _____

John 3:18 *“Whoever believes in him is not condemned.”*

Our part: _____

What God has promised: _____

John 3:36 *“Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life.”*

Our part: _____

What God has promised: _____

Matthew 11:28 *“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”*

Our part: _____

What God has promised: _____

Act 16:31 *“Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved.”*

Our part: _____

What God has promised: _____

Romans 10:13 *“Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”*

Our part: _____

What God has promised: _____

The message in all of these verses is the same: If we commit our lives to Jesus Christ, he will save us and give us eternal life.

Commit the following Bible verses to memory.

“But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law” (Galatians 4:4-5).

Read the verses aloud over and over until you can say them from memory. Think about what they mean. Write them on a little card or slip of paper and carry it with you. Repeat the verses every day for a week.

Summarize in a sentence or two the main thing God has taught you in your study.

GUIDE FOR GROUP STUDY

You can lead your family or a group of friends and neighbors or perhaps a church group in this study on Mary, the mother of Jesus. Doing so will strengthen your own life, and God will use you to bless others. The following suggestions will help you lead a small group study.

Each person in the group has contributions to make. Each person should take part in the discussion. No one should dominate the time together.

Begin the study with prayer. Read aloud Luke 1:26-56.

Share a brief overview of the Old Testament. Point out that God worked for many centuries preparing his people and the world for the coming of his Son. Use the 18 items from the “Background” section as points in your summary.

Using the six drawings as visual aids, tell the story of Mary in your own words. Take your time and show the drawings to the group as you tell the story. Answer any questions group members may ask.

Use with the group the activities under the “Application” section. Lead each group member to respond.

Ask members of the group to respond to the following questions. Encourage members to share thoughts and feelings.

1. Why do you think God chose Mary to be the mother of Jesus?
2. Why do you think Mary went to see Elizabeth?
3. Do you think Mary shared with Joseph what had happened before she went to see Elizabeth?
4. Do you think the baby in Elizabeth's womb recognized that Mary bore the Messiah in her womb? How could this be?
5. Why do you think Mary spent three months with Elizabeth before returning home?
6. Why is it wrong to pray to Mary?

Lead the group in memorizing Galatians 4:4-5. Ask volunteers to explain the verses in their own words.

Read to the group the following section "Responding to God." Pray the prayer for yourself and help each person pray it for himself or herself.

RESPONDING TO GOD

Now that you have studied God's Word, he wants you to respond.

The Bible teaches that you are a sinner. *"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). "There is no one righteous, not even one" (Rom. 3:10).*

But God loves you and sent his Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross for your sin. *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8).*

You receive Christ as your Savior by turning from your sin and placing your faith and trust in him. *"Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out" (Acts 3:19). "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Rom. 10:13).*

Pray this prayer: *"Dear God, I know that I'm a sinner. I believe that Jesus died for my sins and rose from the dead and is alive today. I now turn from my sins. I am placing my faith and trust in Jesus alone to be my Savior and to forgive me. I receive Jesus into my life as my Savior and Lord. From this day forward, I will follow Jesus. Thank you, Lord Jesus, for loving me and for coming into my life. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen."*

Welcome into God's family!

Share with others that you have received Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord. Ask for baptism by immersion in a local church as a public expression of your faith. If there is no church near you, start a church by gathering a group of persons in your home and worship together on a regular basis. Read your Bible and pray each day. Tell others what Christ has done for you and what he can do for them.