

Great Moments in Faith: Mary's Pregnancy

Passage: Luke 1:26-57, Matthew 1:18-25. Mary's pregnancy

Background: It has been hundreds of years since the prophets stopped prophesying. Israel has been ruled by many different nations and its last bit of freedom has been taken away by the Romans within living memory. The people still follow God and the biblical laws are very much in force among God's people.

Don't Miss: Mary would have probably been 13 or 14 at the time, and any infidelity to Joseph was supposed to have resulted in Mary being stoned. Mary's family seems to have a negative reaction to everything as they are not mentioned and she is forced to flee her hometown about when she would have started to show. Also, make sure you note that Joseph was only warned in a dream and did not have the visitor physically that Mary did.

What would this have been like if you put yourself in the shoes of....

Mary: You are a young teenager, engaged to a man you might or might not know well. And suddenly you're pregnant in a place where you can be killed for being pregnant. You don't hear from your fiancée and are forced to leave your hometown.

Joseph: The woman you are supposed to spend your life with is pregnant and it's not yours. Then you get a strange dream to stick with her and let everyone think you sinned with her and the child is yours.

Gabriel: You know what joy this birth will bring, but you also know what pain the pregnancy will bring.

The Townspeople: You are waiting for the savior, but you also are following God's laws.

Questions:

- Both Mary and Joseph yielding to God's will without complaint. What would you have done in their shoes?
- This is the good news, but what makes it good? Did anyone in this story see what this would mean to the world?
- What would you do if your teenage daughter told you she was pregnant by God? What about if it was your girlfriend?
- What sort of faith do the different people have in this story? What evidence do they each have to lead them to that faith? What sort of faith do we have?
- What might have happened to Mary if God hadn't already prepared Mary's relative Elizabeth with her own miraculous pregnancy? How was John the Baptist already preparing the way for Jesus?
- How did Mary and Joseph make it through these nine months?
- Despite good reasons on God's part, did any of this make sense to the people as a whole?
- Does this change your understanding any of when the innkeeper said there was no room "for them" in his inn?

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The Sticking Points (Take-Away Talking Points):

- God always has reasons for what God does, but they are not always obvious and often come with a price.
- The Christian life is not pain free, even if we follow God's plan. And not everyone will agree that we are following God even when we are.
- God will give us what we need to be able to hold faith in His plan. It is up to us if we choose to use that faith or not.
- Mary truly meant it when she said all generations will call her blessed, and they do. But blessings do not mean ease, fame, wealth, or popularity.
- Sticking with God's will is always easier together.
- Peace comes when we accept God's will for us, not when the road gets easier.