

CHRISTMAS SPECIAL 2011, Part 5: Young Virgin Mary

Young Virgin Mary was a fantastic young lady whose soul was filled with Bible doctrine (cf. her doctrinal conceptualization and systemization in Luke 1:46-55). In this essay I should like to briefly discuss how one should and should not view Mary.

She should never be the object of worship as she is in the Roman Catholic religion. The Bible teaches that worship is reserved for God alone (*latria*), Roman Catholics believe that Mary should be venerated in a lesser sense (*hyperdulia*) as the most highly favored above all other creatures since she is the “Mother of God” and “Queen of Heaven.” Originally the title “Mother of God” was used to emphasize the fact that Jesus was God in the flesh and not just a human being. As far as her being His mother, she is only mother of the human nature of Jesus.

Roman Catholics accuse Protestants of not honoring Mary. However, this is not true. We do honor her, but we recognize that she is a human being, not God, and the Bible commands us to worship the Lord *alone* (Matt. 4:10). We honor her as a wonderful doctrinal believer with great integrity. She was a virgin who had saved herself for Joseph. It was her integrity that gave her the capacity to understand the difference between love and lust. There are two aspects of “loving” a member of the opposite sex. There is the *liking* (e.g., loving the object) and there is the *wanting* (e.g., sexual attraction). It is extremely important that the liking takes precedent. If the wanting comes first or is dominant, it is just a matter of time when that thrill fades. It is only when a person grows in the liking of the person (loving their souls) that true sexual or erotic *love* can really take place. True sexual love is intimate and unifying and this cannot take place apart from real development of the liking aspect. In the liking dimension there is rapport and a desire to give or please the other person. In the wanting dimension the emphasis is fulfillment of self. In the liking the emphasis becomes on pleasing the person rather than just using the person for personal pleasure. At any rate, Mary was a virgin who had saved herself for her right man, Joseph. Although she would later endure horrendous pain, like the loss of her young husband and the crucifixion of her son, she had the spiritual virtue to press on and use all of those difficulties to draw closer to God. Character always moves one’s volition. The more one uses volition for God, the easier and more blessed it is; the more one exercises negative volition, the harder it becomes to love the things of God.

Mary’s incredible virtue does not mean that she was sinless. She openly confessed that she was a sinner in need of a Savior just like any other human being. She said, “my soul magnifies the Lord, And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.” Furthermore, the Bible never says that Mary was to be blessed *over* all women, to the contrary, she was simply *among* women” (Luke 1:28, emphasis added). In practice many Roman Catholics not only exalt Mary above all women, but over Jesus Christ. They exalt her to the place of God. This is Mariolatry. The cult of Mariolatry grew in the Roman Catholic Church during the Middle Ages, adding to her such titles as “Coredematrix,” and “Queen of Heaven.” However, this manifests a pagan influence on Christianity patterned after the old Babylonian goddess called by this very name: “queen of heaven” in Jeremiah 7:18; 44:17-19, 25.

Mary was not immaculately conceived (i.e., conceived without sin). The Bible asserts that every human being is born in sin (Psa. 51:5; Rom. 3:23; 5:12). The only exception is Christ because of the virgin birth and because He came from Heaven. Again, Mary proclaimed her own sinfulness, "my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior" (Luke 1:46). Like everyone else, Mary too needed a Savior. Furthermore, the Roman Catholic doctrine of Perpetual Virginity is false. After the birth of Jesus, Joseph and Mary had other children—Jesus had brothers and sisters:

Matthew 13:55-56 "Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary, and His brothers, James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? ⁵⁶ "And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then *did* this man *get* all these things?"

So how should we view her? We should view her as a fantastic grace oriented believer. A wonderful young lady who made God and His Word the center of her life. We should honor her for her personal love of God as expressed in the Magnificat (which has at least 15 discernible quotations from the Old Testament). Let's glean a few principles from her Hymn of the Incarnation:

1. In the first strophe she begins her hymn by offering up her whole being to God for His grace. She loves God with all of her heart, soul, and mind:

Luke 1:46-47 And Mary said: "My soul exalts the Lord, ⁴⁷ And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.

2. In the second strophe she dwells for a moment on the gracious privilege that she has been given to be the mother of the humanity of the God-man:

Luke 1:48-50 "For He has had regard for the humble state of His bondservant; For behold, from this time on all generations will count me blessed. ⁴⁹ "For the Mighty One has done great things for me; And holy is His name. ⁵⁰ "And His mercy is upon generation after generation Toward those who fear Him.

3. In the third strophe she actually sets forth relations of the Birth of Jesus to the action of God's providence in the history of human nations and human lives:

Luke 1:51-53 "He has done mighty deeds with His arm; He has scattered *those who were* proud in the thoughts of their heart. ⁵² "He has brought down rulers from *their* thrones, And has exalted those who were humble. ⁵³ "He has filled the hungry with good things; And sent away the rich empty-handed.

4. In the concluding strophe, she traces the great gift which, through her, has been bestowed on the race of man, up to its sources in the Compassion and the Faithfulness of God:

Luke 1:54-55 "He has given help to Israel His servant, In remembrance of His mercy, ⁵⁵ As He spoke to our fathers, To Abraham and his offspring forever."

Quite a remarkable young lady, wouldn't you say? Consider the doctrines embedded in the above passages: e.g., recognition of herself as a sinner, the marvelous grace of God, the consequences of the Birth of Jesus, Jesus Christ controlling human history, His Birth in relation to prophecy of Abraham's seed.

No, she should not be worshipped! However, she stands in a wonderful line of doctrinal believers—overcomers—who were able to connect Scriptural truths and doctrinal concepts in such a way as to see the Marvelous Matchless Plan of God. She was not only a doctrinal believer, her hymn reveals her enormous personal love for God. Throughout the hymn she praises God. She is not occupied with the details of life—as hard and distracting the political situation was in her time—she was occupied with the God of all Grace! What an inspiration! Wow!

In Christ,

Pastor Don