

Mary by Jason McBratney

This article is based on the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church, in particular, the teachings concerning the worship and veneration of Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ.

So what do we know about Mary from the New Testament record? Surprisingly, considering her important role in modern religion, there is not that much written about her personal history. She was a relative of Elizabeth, who was the wife of the priest Zechariah of the priestly division of Abijah. Mary resided at Nazareth in Galilee, presumably with her parents, while betrothed to Joseph of the House of David (Luke 1:26). She, like Joseph, was also a descendant of King David. During their betrothal, which is the first stage of a Jewish marriage, the angel Gabriel announced to her that she was to be the mother of the promised Messiah by conceiving him through the Holy Spirit.

The fact that Mary was to be the means by which God brought His only begotten Son into the world leaves no doubt that she was a very special and remarkable woman.

When the Angel Gabriel appeared to her, he ensures that Mary was made aware of how precious she was in the sight of God:

Luke 1:26-28 "And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women."

Mary's response to such a greeting was understandable:

Luke 1:29-33 "And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her."

When Joseph was told of her conception in a dream by "an angel of the Lord" , he was surprised; but the angel commanded him to be unafraid and take her as his wife, which Joseph obediently did.

Seeing as the angel had also told Mary that Elizabeth was now pregnant with John the Baptist, Mary then hurried to visit her relation, who was living with her husband Zechariah in a city of Judah in the hill country. Once Mary arrived at the house and greeted Elizabeth, Elizabeth immediately proclaimed Mary as "the mother of [her] Lord," and gave her a hymn of thanksgiving.

After a time Mary returned home, A decree of the Roman emperor Augustus (Luke 2:1) required that Joseph and Mary should proceed to Bethlehem, about 130 km from Nazareth, for an enrolment. While they were there, Mary gave birth to her firstborn son; the Lord Jesus Christ.

During her life, Mary had at least four other sons; James, Joses, Simon and Judas, as well as daughters (Matthew 13:55-56, Mark 6:3)

Apart from these events, the New Testament really has little more to say of Mary. Her last recorded words were, "Whatsoever He saith, do it." Referring to the Lord Jesus Christ. And she is lastly mentioned as being an attendant at the upper room meeting shortly after Jesus' ascension.

Concerning this, a Professor Boettner states: *"The apostles did not show her any special honour. Peter, Paul, John and James do not mention her name even once in the epistles which they wrote to the churches. John took care of her until she died, but he does not mention her in any of his three epistles or in the book of Revelation. When the church was instituted at Pentecost there was only one name given among men whereby we must be saved, that of Jesus (Acts 4:12). Wherever the eyes of the church are directed to the abundance of grace, there is no mention of Mary. Surely this silence is a rebuke to those who would build a system of salvation around her. God has given us all the record we need concerning Mary, and that record does not indicate that worship or veneration in any form is to be given to her. How complete, then, is the falsehood of Romanist that gives primary worship and devotion to her!"*

With the twisting of truth and the development of the Papacy, Rome commenced her invention of the cult of Mary and has now produced the figure of the Roman Mary, completely unrecognizable as the Mary of Scripture. She has now become Rome's supreme goddess and deity.

The Roman Catholic church unscripturally glorifies Mary in her immaculate conception and sinlessness, her eternal virginity and co-redemption status, her bodily assumption and unlimited miracles, her coronation as the Queen of Heaven and her ever developing position as even higher than God.

In the book *The Devotion of the "Sacred Heart of Mary"* (published in 1840 p43) we read: "The Church, assisted and instructed by the Holy Spirit, gives to Mary titles which resemble those given to her Divine Son. Jesus is our King; Mary is our Queen. Jesus is our advocate and mediator; Mary is also our advocate and mediatrix. Jesus is our hope, our refuge, our consolation: we say the same of Mary. Jesus is the way which leads to heaven; Mary is the gate of Heaven."

Other titles given to Mary include:

- * The Holy Virgin of Virgins
- * The Mother most pure
- * The Ark of the Covenant
- * The Refuge of sinners
- * The Comforter of the afflicted
- * The Mother of our Redeemer
- * The Queen of Angels
- * The Queen of prophets
- * The Virgin most powerful
- * The Queen of Apostles
- * The Queen of martyrs
- * The Mirror of justice
- * The Seat of wisdom
- * The Queen of all saints
- * The Mother of our Creator
- * The Holy Mother of God

The doctrine of "Mary, the Mother of God," as we know it today, is the result of centuries of growth

As late as the fourth century there are no indications of any special veneration of Mary. The phrase "Mother of God" originated in the Council of Ephesus, in the year 431. It occurs in the Creed of Chalcedon, which was adopted by the council which met in 451, and in regard to the person of Christ it declared that He was, "Born of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God according to the manhood."

Concerning this S. E. Anderson says: *"Roman priests call Mary the "mother of God", a name impossible, illogical and unscriptural. It is impossible, for God can have no mother. He is eternal and without beginning while Mary was born and died within a few short years. It is illogical, for God does not require a mother for His existence. Furthermore, if the Roman terminology is correct and Mary is to be called God's mother, then Joseph was God's step-father, James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas were God's brothers, Elizabeth was God's aunt, John the Baptist was God's cousin, Heli was God's grandfather, and Adam was God's 59th great grandfather."*

Another doctrine held by the Roman Catholic Church, known as the immaculate conception of Mary asserts that, although conceived in a normal, biological manner, Mary was preserved by God from the stain of original sin. At the time of Mary's conception, she was filled with the grace the God and lived her entire life completely free from sin.

On November the 1st 1950 as a natural consequence to Mary's Immaculate Conception and sinless life, a new Roman Catholic belief was invented by Pope Pius XII, the bodily assumption of Mary.

In an article entitled the "Assumption of the blessed virgin Mary" we read, *"Mary was warned of her approaching end by Saint Michael the Archangel, who conducts souls to Heaven, and was surrounded, on her death-bed by the apostles, who were miraculously transported to her bedside from their various mission-fields. It was said that Jesus appeared, bore away her soul, and returned three days after her burial, when angels carried her body to Paradise where it was reunited with her soul under the Tree of Life."*

After the announcement of the doctrine of the assumption of Mary there was added the usual warning "anyone who may henceforth doubt or deny this doctrine is utterly fallen away from the divine and Catholic faith."

So, although the Bible mentions nothing of any of these events, Mary's sinless body is also preserved from corruption, and her resurrection and ascension are made parallel to that of Christ's. Mary, like Jesus is said to be enthroned in heaven where she makes intercession for the millions of people throughout the world who seek her assistance.

I am going to compare a number of quotations taken from the book "The Glories of Mary" with the word of God.

"The Glories of Mary" was written by one of the greatest devotional writers of the Roman Catholic Church, Bishop Alphonse de Liguori. In the Editor's notes concerning the author we can read, "Everything that our saint has written is, as it were, a summary of Catholic tradition on the subject that it treats; it is not an individual author, it is, so to speak, the church herself that speaks to us by the voice of her prophets, her apostles, her pontiffs, her saints, her fathers, her doctors of all nations and ages. No other book appears to be more worthy of recommendation in this respect than The Glories of Mary."

In this book Mary is given the place belonging to Christ. Reading from page 82 *"And is truly a mediatrix of peace between sinners and God. Sinners receive pardon by Mary alone."* *"Mary is our life, in obtaining this grace for sinners by her intercession, thus restores them to life."*

Yet we can read in quite plainly in 1 Tim. 2:5 *"For there is one God, and ONE Mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus"* and again in John 14:6 *"Jesus saith to him: I am the way, and the truth and the life. No man cometh to the Father, but by me."*

The book also states (p. 130) that *"The Holy Church commands a WORSHIP peculiar to Mary."* *"Many things ... are asked from God, and are not granted; they are asked from MARY and are obtained."*

(pp. 254, 257). *"We often more quickly obtain what we ask by calling on the name of Mary than by invoking that of Jesus."* *"She ... is our salvation, our life, our hope, our counsel, our refuge and our help"* (p. 160) *"Mary is called ... the gate of heaven because no one can enter that blessed kingdom without passing through HER"* (pp 169,170) *"The Way of Salvation is open to none otherwise than through MARY," and since "Our salvation is in the hands of Mary ... He who is protected by Mary will be saved, he who is not will be lost"* (pp 180,181) *"All power is given to thee in Heaven and on earth," so that "at the command of MARY all obey - even God ... and thus ... God has placed the whole church ... under the domination of Mary."* (p193) *Mary is "the advocate of the whole human race ... for she can do what she wills with God."* (p. 197) *"Mary is the peacemaker between sinners and God"*

These statements are in direct conflict to the teaching of the Bible!

Christ says John 10:9 *"I am the door. By me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved,"* John 16: 24 *"Hitherto you have not asked anything in my name. Ask, and you shall receive,"* for, *"Whatsoever we shall ask according to His will, He heareth us."* 1 John 2:1 *"If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins"* Also in Acts 4:12 we read *"For there is no other name under Heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved."* And again in Eph 1:21 *"... His Name is above every name ... not only in this world, but also in that which is to come."* Eph. 2:13,14 *"But now in Christ Jesus, you, who sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace."*

Reading again from page 260 of the book "The Glories of Mary" the bishop continues to state that all glory should be given unto Mary. *"That at Thy name, every knee should bow, of things in heaven, on earth, and under the earth."* This statement may seem familiar to some, if we turn to Philippians. 2:9, 10 *"God also hath highly exalted Him and hath given Him a Name which is above all names, that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in Heaven, on earth and under the earth"*

Liguori, more than any other one person has been responsible for promoting Mariology in the Roman Catholic Church, dethroning Christ and enthroning Mary in his place. Yet instead of excommunicating him for his heresies, the Roman Catholic Church has canonised him as a saint and has published his book in many editions.

Each of these doctrines can also be found in the Catechism of the Catholic Church , an official exposition of the teachings of the Catholic Church first published in 1992 by authority of Pope John Paul II.

As we can see, none of these doctrines concerning Mary have any scriptural backing, so how did they come to be official Catholic beliefs?

The answer lies in the importance given to Church tradition and the highly regarded doctrine of papal infallibility.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church states that Church tradition is equal in authority to the Bible. Catholic men and women are not allowed to believe what they read in the Bible without checking it out with the Church. They are required to find out how the bishops of the Church interpret a passage and they are to accept what the bishops teach as if it came from God Himself. They are not allowed to use their own judgment or follow their own conscience. They are required to believe whatever the bishops teach without questioning it.

The Catechism states that when the bishops officially teach doctrine relating to faith and morals, then God super-naturally prevents them from making any errors.

The Pope also, is said to be infallible whenever he makes an official decree on matters of faith and morals. According to doctrine, it is impossible for the Pope to teach false doctrine. Catholics are expected to obey the Pope

without question.

The problem is that the claim for papal infallibility does not stand up to the test of history. For example, Pope Zosimus (417-418 A.D.) reversed the pronouncement of a previous pope. He also retracted a doctrinal pronouncement that he himself had previously made. Pope Honorius was condemned as a heretic by the Sixth Ecumenical Council (680-681 A.D.). He was also condemned as a heretic by Pope Leo II, as well as by every other pope until the eleventh century. So here we have "infallible" popes condemning another "infallible" pope as a heretic.

The doctrine of papal infallibility leaves the gate open for sinful, mortal men to invent new and unscriptural doctrine, they can add, or remove any part of Gods word they see fit.

According to Jesus, Scripture is the plumb line for measuring everything else. He judged religious traditions by comparing them to Scripture. When religious traditions contradicted Scripture, he condemned them. This shows clearly that nothing is equal in authority to Scripture. The Bible stands alone as the standard by which all other things are to be judged.

Reading from Mark 7 starting at verse 1:

"[1] Then came together unto him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem.

[2] And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashen, hands, they found fault.

[3] For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders.

[4] And when they come from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups, and pots, brasen vessels, and of tables.

[5] Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands?

[6] He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.

[7] Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

[8] For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do.

[9] And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.

[10] For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death:

[11] But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free.

[12] And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother;

[13] Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye."

Although Mary was a very special and remarkable woman, the Roman Catholic Church, through her self professed infallibility has promoted her above both Jesus and God, to become the most praised and glorified being.

These teachings of the Roman Catholic Church have absolutely no scriptural bases and were invented by the imaginations of mortal, sinful men.

Jesus teaches us in Luke 11 that all prayer must be addressed to "Our father who art in heaven." Jesus did not even teach us to pray to himself; when he prayed, he prayed to God. All praise and glory is reserved for God and God alone, certainly not to Mary