

Mary's Praise to God

Key Verses: *"Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour."*
—*Luke 1:46,47*

Selected Scripture:
Luke 1:39-56

crowd which had come to him to be baptized, saying, "As for me, I baptize you with water; but one is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to untie the thong of his sandals; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire."—*Luke 3:15,16, New American Standard Bible*

As surely as God read the hearts of young David and his parents when selecting him to be Israel's future king, he likewise chose a maiden of noble character to bear the nation's promised Messiah. The testimony respecting Mary and Joseph leaves no doubt that they were both pious people and attentive to the laws of God. Luke writes specifically that Jesus' "parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover."—*Luke 2:41*

In addition to her faithfulness to Israel's law, the fact that Mary was honored by God above all other women to be the mother of Jesus, also testified to her nobility of character and purity of heart. The Scriptures record the moment she heard the message: "The angel Gabriel was

MANY IN ISRAEL WERE IN expectation of the promised Messiah when Jesus was born, because of Daniel's prophecy of the seventy weeks. (Dan. 9:24-27) Some even thought that John the Baptist, whose ministry preceded Jesus by only a few months, was the Messiah. John dispelled this thought in an answer to the

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. ... Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS." (Luke 1:26-28,31) Our Key Verse gives Mary's beautiful response to the angel.

We note here two important corroborating statements regarding Mary. First, she was a virgin, in accordance with the prophetic words: "The Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:21-23) Second, Mary was of the lineage of David, fulfilling God's promise to him given in I Chronicles 17:11-14.

When Mary asked the angel how it would be possible for her to have this child when she was still a virgin, he answered by saying simply, "With God nothing shall be impossible." Mary responded with the same trust and confidence in God that David had displayed: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word."—Luke 1:34-38

Following the words of our Key Verse, Mary continued to speak of God's glorious character: "He hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name. And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation." (vss. 48-50) What a great lesson we can learn from Mary! Just as God called her for a special purpose, he has called us to the "one hope" of our calling. (Eph. 4:4) Let us, therefore, give praise for the opportunity of becoming a member of the body of Christ with similar words as Mary's: "Be it unto me according to thy word." ■