

# Mary, Mother of the Savior

By Margot Hovley  
Church Magazines

*Mary possessed the great characteristics of a soul submissive to the Father.*

At Christmastime, as I set out the small statuettes of our family’s Nativity scene, my eyes are always drawn to Mary tenderly admiring her newborn Son lying in a manger. We obviously don’t know if the artist’s depiction of this scene is accurate, but I appreciate how it invites me to consider Mary and the enormous responsibility placed on her shoulders. Surely she must have been one of Heavenly Father’s very elect to be chosen for her unique role as the mother of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world (see 1 Nephi 11:15–21; Mosiah 3:8).

## Royal Lineage

Many scriptures suggest that Jesus was of the royal lineage of King David (see Isaiah 11:1; Jeremiah 23:5; Matthew 1:1, 6, 17; Luke 1:32; Acts 2:29–30; Romans 1:3), but from whom did that lineage come? Mary or Joseph?

Elder James E. Talmage (1862–1933) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles wrote, “That Mary was of Davidic

descent is plainly set forth in many scriptures; for since Jesus was to be born of Mary, yet was not begotten by Joseph, who was the reputed, and, according to the law of the Jews, the legal, father, the blood of David’s posterity was given to the body of Jesus through Mary alone.” Elder Talmage also explained, “Luke’s record is regarded by many . . . as the pedigree of Mary, while Matthew’s is accepted as that of Joseph.”<sup>1</sup>

## Submissive

We know little about Mary’s life, but what we do know gives us an example of humble submissiveness (see Luke 1:38). When the angel appeared to her, he informed her that she was “highly favoured” and that “the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women” (Luke 1:28). Mary, being troubled by these words (see verse 29), was reassured by the angel: “Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God” (verse 30).

It’s worth noting that for a woman in Jewish culture to become pregnant before marriage would have created a dire situation. Would Joseph, her espoused husband, now refuse to marry her, believing her to have broken Jewish law by having a relationship with another man? Would she be ostracized from Jewish society? Or worse, stoned? Would her own family think her sullied and disown her?

We don’t know if these concerns flashed through Mary’s mind in that moment, but in her brief, humble response, we see precisely why she was chosen in the first place: “Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word” (Luke 1:38).

I’ll do it, says Mary. Whatever is asked of me, however difficult it may seem, whatever the consequences may be to me personally, I’ll do it.

## Courageous

When Mary was expecting, she sought out family for support, facing her

*As the mother of the Savior, Mary fulfilled her role with confidence and courage. Not only did she nurture and care for Him as a child, but she was with Him at the very end, witnessing His Crucifixion.*



duty with confidence and courage. Her interaction with her cousin Elizabeth is a testament to that strength. Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught:

“As the expectant mother of Jesus, Mary sought comfort and peace in the home of her cousin Elisabeth. Elisabeth greeted her: ‘Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb’ [Luke 1:42]. Mary responded with a beautiful, inspired psalm . . . :

“My soul doth magnify the Lord,  
“And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. . . .

“For he that is mighty hath done to

me great things; and holy is his name’ [Luke 1:46-47, 49].”<sup>2</sup>

Rather than think of her unanticipated pregnancy as a burden, Mary glorified God and rejoiced.

### **Faithful**

Mary’s example of obedience and faithfulness continued throughout her life. The scriptural account suggests that she became a devoted disciple of her holy Son and was with Him from time to time throughout His mission. She was also with Him at the very end, witnessing His Crucifixion. After the Ascension, she continued in prayer

with the Apostles (see Acts 1:14).

That example is one for all of us to follow—a life of faithfulness.

Christmas is a season of giving, and Mary, as a central figure in the scriptural account, shows us the one gift that matters more than all others: the gift of ourselves, the gift of aligning our will to God’s, humbly accepting His mission for us and fulfilling it to the utmost. That’s what Christ did, as did Mary, His mother before Him. ■

### **NOTES**

1. James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, 3rd ed. (1916), 86.
2. D. Todd Christofferson, “For He That Is Mighty Hath Done to Me Great Things” (BYU Women’s Conference address, May 3, 2019).