

# MARY REJOICED\*

*Jesus was conceived in the virgin womb of Mary. She submitted and rejoiced in God's plan for her.*

## SCRIPTURE†

**Luke 1:26-33**

**Luke 1:46-55**

**Luke 2:1-7**

**Luke 2:15-19**

**Luke 2:21-39**

## MUSIC‡

Away in a Manger

**Fullness of Grace (Koerts) SATB**

Gentle Mary Laid Her Child

Infant Holy, Infant Lowly

Joy Has Dawned

Silent Night, Holy Night

Thou Who Wast Rich

What Child Is This



Artwork from the James Tissot Collection (Brooklyn Museum). [FreeBibleImages.org](http://FreeBibleImages.org)

\* Theme is **fourth** in the **Advent** Christmas worship series.

† Daily preparatory readings shown in **bold**.

‡ Published choral and vocal music shown in **bold**.

# PRESENTING & PROMOTING THIS THEME

## PONDERING ALL THESE THINGS

**Luke 2:19, 22-39** | *Luke tells us that after Jesus' birth, the angels' announcement, and the shepherds' worship in the stable, Mary pondered everything that had happened in her heart. Later, when she and Joseph dedicated Jesus at the temple, Simeon revealed to Mary that one day a sword would pierce her soul (referring to Jesus' death). We will try to look at Christ through the eyes of Mary. While we don't know exactly how much she understood, we can try to imagine what she thought about Who her Son was and what would happen to Him. She must have felt a wide range of emotions – fear, joy, sorrow, amazement, etc. We do know that Mary worshiped Christ, too, and recognized her own need for a Savior.*

The Christmas narrative as we read it in Luke opens and closes with a portrayal of the same character – a young woman named Mary. The descriptions of her are simple: betrothed but not yet married, physically pure, living in a poor town called Nazareth. She wouldn't have been any older than me – maybe even a few years younger – but her responses to her circumstances demonstrate unquestionable maturity and genuine humility. Interestingly, of all that Luke could have said regarding what Mary thought about Jesus' miraculous birth, he chooses only to say that she treasured up the memories of what had happened and pondered them in her heart.

So what might the Christmas story have looked like through Mary's eyes? What might she have thought about? She must have experienced an incredible range of emotions.

We know that Mary's initial response to the angel Gabriel's announcement that she would give birth to a Son was fear and confusion – she was “greatly troubled.” Even after the angel explained that she would conceive supernaturally, her mind probably skipped ahead a few months and feared the shame that would come with the assumption that she was expecting an illegitimate child. After all, even Joseph assumed the worst about her at first. But Mary's submission to the God she trusted did not allow her to surrender to self-pitying fearfulness.

Later, when she visited Elizabeth, John the Baptist's mother, she reflected on God's work with amazement and joy. This young woman marveled that God was choosing to use her as a part of His plan to fulfill His promises to Abraham. She rejoiced in His mercy. She surely felt these same emotions again at Jesus' birth – the amazement and joy that all new mothers feel, but heightened by the knowledge that this Child was the Promised One. As she laid her newborn in the manger, maybe she wondered how God's plan would come to pass. How could this tiny baby be the Savior of all mankind?

While we don't know exactly how much Mary understood about Jesus' mission on earth, the Bible does record that early on, she received at least a glimpse of His future suffering. When

she and Joseph took Jesus to the temple to dedicate Him, the old prophet Simeon revealed that the Child would be a light to the Gentiles and the glory of Israel. But the cost would be great – a sword that would pierce Mary’s soul, the death of her Son. She must have felt profound sorrow at this revelation, yet it underscored Jesus’ purpose in coming. He fulfilled the ancient promises and satisfied the hopeful expectations of His faithful remnant through His sinless life and substitutionary death. Mary recognized her need to accept her own Son as her Savior, and she worshiped Him. As “the saved of every race” – those who have likewise admitted our need for the Savior – we follow her example of humble yet joyful worship. (Amy Tilson)

## NOT SINLESS, BUT HUMBLE

*Present Mary’s humble response to the news that she would bear Messiah.*

Just as the Old Testament prophets had foretold the coming of Messiah, so God sent a messenger to tell when the birth of Jesus was about to happen. When the angel Gabriel first appeared to Mary, he said, “Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women” (Luke 1:28). “Fear not, Mary: for thou has found favor”—or grace—“with God. And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus” (1:30-31).

Mary was not sinless. She had human flaws like anyone else. But Mary was a woman who knew and feared the Lord. The psalm of praise she spoke after she heard the incredible news shows that Mary had a great knowledge of the Scriptures, and a heart of worship toward God.

And Mary was humble. After all of the details of Jesus’ birth had been revealed to her, even in spite of the fact that she would bear this child publically as an unmarried woman, Mary said to Gabriel, “Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word” (Luke 1:38). She was ready to be used of God however He saw fit; she submitted to His plan, even at the risk of her own reputation.

But Mary’s humility pales in comparison to the humility of the child she bore. Think of it! The Son of God, who is Himself God and Lord of all, was born as a human being. A woman went into labor for Him. He was birthed like any other child. And not in a great and famous city in His day—but in little Bethlehem, the small town whose only claim to fame was that King David was born there almost a millennium before. Jesus wasn’t born in a palace or a modern hospital—but in a “lowly cattle shed,” where His “mother laid [Him] in a manger for His bed.”

Today we worship the Son for His humility. He submitted Himself to the squalor of a stable in David’s City—for us! We worship Him, for because of His humility, one day “our eyes at last shall see Him.”

## REJOICING SUBMISSION

**Luke 1:26-55** | *When Mary received the news from the angel, she was probably only 15 or 16. Her response to God's redemption plan—and how that plan would “take over” her life—was one of sweet submission and great rejoicing. Her psalm of praise (the Magnificat) indicates she was eager for God to use her in this way. She wasn't ignorant of the shame and accusations that would come upon her because of this miracle. Her response is counter to today's culture, in which all (uniquely teenage girls) are encouraged to set their own course.*

The news Gabriel delivered to Mary, that she would bear Messiah, would change her life forever. God was commanding her to let herself be caught up into His larger plan, at the expense of her own wishes and dreams. Yet her response of worship models the delight of submission to God and accepting His plan in the gospel of Christ. Join us Sunday to worship!

These passages can help you prepare: [Insert passages.]



**NORTHWEST VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH**

nwvbc.org | 623-581-3115 | 4030 W Yorkshire Drive, Glendale, AZ 85308