



## **A Contemplative, Biblical Analysis of Mary, Mother of Christ**

### **What did Mary really know?**

By Kathy L. McFarland

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**Quiz 7 Answers – Evangelical and Catholic Beliefs Contrasted**

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**1** How often has the traditional and orthodox view of Mary's virgin conception of Jesus been challenged?

Choose one answer.

- a. This Christian concept is frequently challenged by other beliefs.
- b. This issue has divided Catholic and Protestant believers into heated debates
- c. There has never been debate concerning the virgin birth of Jesus Christ
- d. It has actually not been contested that often

(a) Incorrect. Islamic views of Mary view her as the most righteous woman who conceived Jesus a virgin without a father; however, while Jesus is thought to be a result of virgin birth, He is not considered divine.

Judaism mostly avoids the debate, though those who argue this issue choose a "young maiden" interpretation rather than "virgin" when the Old Testament prophecy like Isaiah 7:14 is referenced.

(b) Incorrect. Catholics and Protestants both fully believe that Mary was a virgin when she conceived Jesus in her womb as a result of the Holy Ghost's actions.

(c) Incorrect. There is always some that try to argue the issue; but, orthodox and traditional belief in this fact and the obvious statement of facts concerning Mary's chastity and pureness in the Word of God prevent serious disagreements from escalating to denial.

(d) Correct. There are some Jews and a few extremely liberal Protestants that try to make a case for a "young maiden" rather than "virgin" interpretation, but it has had little impact on traditional and orthodox Christian belief.

**2** Belief in the virginity of Mary confirms that the LORD God is the Father of Christ within her womb.

Answer:

True  False

(a) True - Correct. Nontrinitarians such as Unitarians, Christadelphians and Jehovah's Witnesses seldom stress Mary's virginity because that proves Christ possesses a divine nature given to Him by God, His Father. Mainstream, orthodox, and traditional Christian belief points to Mary's virginity to show the divine nature received by Christ.

(b) Incorrect. It is Mary's virginity that reveals the divine nature of Christ and is an important matter that forms a great deal of Christian doctrine concerning the Son of God.

**3** The Catholic concept of "Mother of God" as a title for Mary is shared by Protestants.

Answer:

True  False

(a) True - Incorrect. Catholics think Mary to be the mother of God and Protestants reject this title, preferring instead to call her the mother of Jesus. Though she is mother to the Son of God, Protestants believe His divine nature originates from God alone, while his human nature is formed through Mary's womb.

(b) False - Correct. There is a large chasm between the beliefs concerning the Virgin Mary between Catholics and Protestants. Catholics embrace Mary as the "Mother of God" while Protestants declare her to be only the "Mother of Jesus." Protestants say that God's fatherhood brings the divine nature to Christ, while Mary's participation gives Jesus his human nature.

**4** Why is it essential that Protestants fully acknowledge that Mary faithfully contained the Son of God within her womb for a time.

Choose one answer.

- a. To show a united front with Roman Catholic believers
- b. None of the above
- c. To counter the heresy of Nestorius and others who attempt to divide the human and divine natures of Christ
- d. It is not a critical matter of faith to believe the concept of Mary as containing God in her womb for a time

(a) Negative. It is not a matter of getting along in Christianity. Rather, it is the upholding of Christ's true natures of Divine and Human that forms a foundation for Christian belief. Both Catholics and Protestants should be on the same page with this belief, not for unity, but for the statement of God's Truth.

(b) Incorrect.

(c) Correct. On one hand, traditional and orthodox doctrines concerning the human and divine natures of Christ define them as indivisible. It is the solid doctrine of Christian belief that identifies the two natures of Christ, but declares them inseparable. Nestorius and others attempt to divide the human and divine natures of Christ, which leads to a denial that Christ is God.

(d) Incorrect. Though Mary is mother to Jesus and giver of the human part of his nature, and is not mother to God, she did contain God within her womb for a while, which is a critical matter of faith. If this is not understood, then the divine nature of Christ can be removed in casual debate, and a slew of foundational doctrine will come tumbling down.

**5** Both Catholics and Protestants agree that Mary is blessed by God, and in turn, blessed among women, to be chosen as His faithful handmaiden, and bear the Son of God.

Answer:

True  False

(a) True - Correct. Catholics often go too far in their claims that Mary is the mother of God, and Protestants do not place enough emphasis on the blessed mother of Christ. Somewhere in between the two extremes lies a really good place of faith, where Mary is known by all to be very blessed by God.

(b) False – Incorrect. If there is any question of same belief between Catholics and Protestants concerning the blessed state of Mary, then it surely is the fault of Protestants. It seems that Protestants often go out of their way to humanize Mary in a knee-jerk response in combatting the false doctrine that suggests Mary is the mother of God. Protestants have been cheated out of a wonderful faith journey by neglecting their Bible study of Mary.

**6** Devotion to Mary that replaces some of the worship of the Lord is a Protestant Practice gone awry.

Answer:

True  False

(a) True - Incorrect. Catholics have increased their honor toward Mary to the point that it does not reflect the Mary, mother of Jesus that is reflected in the Word of God. The doctrine of Mary established by the Roman Catholic Church is based upon traditional belief that has expanded into a cult-like worship of Mary today.

(b) False - Correct. It is not the Protestants, but the Catholics that elevate Mary to be equal to God. However, Protestants neglect to honor Mary as is befitting of her blessed state, and equally are in error concerning the things of Mary due to their lack of study concerning her time and ways.

7 What is the doctrine of "Perpetual Virginity"?

Choose one answer.

- a. It is the belief that Mary was a virgin before conception with Christ
- b. It is the belief that Jesus maintained virginity throughout His life
- c. It is the belief that Mary remained a virgin forever.
- d. It is the doctrine that requires priests to remain celibate

(a) Incorrect. It is biblically sound to declare Mary a virgin before the conception and birth of Jesus Christ (Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38); however, "Perpetual Virginity" speaks of something different.

(b) Nope. This term applies to Mary, not Jesus

(c) Correct. It is a doctrine that many Catholics maintain as they point out that it this belief is not forbidden by Scripture alone.

(d) Incorrect. This doctrine applies to Mary, not priests.

8 How is perpetual virginity of Mary disputed by Scripture?

Choose one answer.

- a. There is no dispute; perpetual virginity doctrine cannot be found to be against Scripture.
- b. The existence of the four brothers of Christ, James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas (Matthew 13:55-56), and sisters originating from the union of Mary and Joseph

- c. None of the above
- d. While not disputed, there is also some proof that this condition exists through Mary's lifetime

(a) False. While it is true that the basic doctrine has no direct prohibition, it is flawed. The presence of other offspring between Mary and Joseph, as well as the very human nature of Mary, prevent this possibility, and those things can be found in Scripture.

(b) Correct; Scriptures prohibit the declaration that Mary is a virgin forever because of her noted offspring with Joseph; thus, the doctrine of perpetual virginity is proven impossible according to Scripture.

(c) Wrong.

(d) Incorrect. There is no proof in Scripture that Mary remained a virgin for her lifetime. Since she had other offspring of Jesus, and she was not impregnated additional times by the Holy Ghost, then Joseph was the father of the normal, human children. There is only one way for that to happen, and that requires the virginity to be unblossomed during marital sexual relations.

**9** What is the term Immaculate Conception that is used to describe a doctrine held by Catholics?

Choose one answer.

- a. It describes the sinless creation of Jesus Christ in the womb of His mother by the Holy Ghost
- b. It says that Mary was born without original sin
- c. It says that Mary was also miraculously conceived through her mother and the Holy Ghost
- d. All of the above

(a) Incorrect. The term immaculate conception does not have anything to do with the conception or existence of Jesus Christ.

(b) Correct. This doctrine says that Mary was preserved from original sin from the moment she was conceived in her mother's womb through natural sexual intercourse between her parents.

(c) Incorrect. Catholics believe that Mary was created through the process of normal human sexual relationships between her mother and father.

(d) Incorrect.

**10** What does the Roman Catholic Church cite in Scripture to support their views concerning the Immaculate Conception of Mary?

Choose one answer.

- a. Luke 1:28
- b. There are no Scripture references that support the idea of Immaculate Conception
- c. Isaiah 7:14
- d. None of the above

(a) Correct. Luke 1:28 declares Mary "full of grace" which they think is an indication of her favored status by God that could only be initiated at her conception.

(b) Incorrect, sort of. There is a Scripture reference that Catholics refer when explaining the Immaculate Conception; however, their reference is a generalized idea that does not support the specific doctrine that is suggested.

(c) Nope. That verse speaks of the young virgin giving birth to the Messiah and does not speak of the young virgin's conception.

(d) Incorrect.

**11** Many, many Christians confuse the term "Immaculate Conception" by thinking that it means the miraculous conception of Jesus Christ to his mother Mary.

Answer:

- True  False

(a) True - Correct. Rather than understanding the correct meaning that speaks of Mary's sinless conception and birth, they confuse it with the idea that it speaks about Christ.

(b) False - Incorrect. It seems that Christians, both Catholic and Protestant, confuse this idea often; while Catholic doctrinal practices are conducted in rote manner, the ideas behind them often confuse them as much as those not a part of the Catholic Church.

**12** Why is the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of Mary an unbiblical notion and unnecessary false teaching? (Many answers possible)

Choose at least one answer.

- a. When God overshadowed Mary, the Holy Ghost placed her in a most holy state
- b. God did not have to make Mary exempt from original sin from her conception, since He is capable of cleansing a sinner
- c. None of the above
- d. God overshadows Mary with the Holy Ghost which sanctifies her

(a) Correct. To hold the Son of God within her womb, God sanctified Mary and put her in a most holy state equal to that of the Ark of the Covenant that held His Presence; for, it was the presence of both divinity and humanity that Mary held within her womb, which required measures to be taken to make the womb of Mary able to contain Him.

(b) Correct. God is quite capable of cleansing the insides of whomever He chooses to occupy.

(c) Incorrect.

(d) Correct. When the God overshadows Mary with the Holy Ghost, He is preparing her to receive the Lord's presence. (Luke 1:35)

### 13 What is the doctrine of Bodily Assumption?

Choose one answer.

- a. The belief that Jesus Christ Resurrected into Heaven upon His death on the cross
- b. The belief that all Christians will go directly to Heaven without experiencing physical death
- c. The belief that Mary was assumed in Heaven without dying first
- d. All of the above

(a) Incorrect. Christ died to the grave then resurrected on the third day into life. (1 Corinthians 15:1-6)

(b) Wrong. Though a saved Christian's physical body will perish, the soul of baptized Christians do not die and stay in the grave for one moment. This belief is part of the doctrines of salvation, sanctification, and justification; but, they speak of the souls of baptized Christians, not of their physical bodies.

(c) Correct. This belief suggests that Mary entered Heaven in the manner of Enoch (Genesis 5:24) and Elijah (2 Kings 2:11).

(d) Incorrect.



**14** What other doctrinal belief must be present for Bodily Assumption to be possible?

Choose one answer.

- a. The doctrine of Baptism
- b. The doctrine of Saints
- c. The doctrine of Immaculate Conception.
- d. The doctrine of Salvation

(a) Incorrect. The Baptism of Jesus Christ rises believers from their symbolic grave into life everlasting; however, it is not a physical relationship but a spiritual relationship that is made new with God. Baptized faithful Christian bodies die, though their souls live eternal without one pause between physical death and life forever with Christ.

(b) Incorrect. Saints are in Heaven, but most gave up their physical body and put on their new spiritual bodies upon arrival.

(c) Correct. Mary must be made sin free before Bodily Assumption can happen, because Romans 6:23 states "the wages of sin is death." If Mary were thought to be part of the rest of the fallen humans, thus a sinner, she would have to die like the rest of us. But, when the faulty doctrine of Immaculate Conception is believed, then Bodily Assumption, where she is raised to Heaven without death, is able to be falsely believed.

(d) Incorrect. Bodily Assumption is not part of the doctrine of salvation. Salvation does not express itself through the assumption of living Christians except in one special instance with the rising of believers in at the time of Rapture.

**15** Who established the doctrine of Bodily Assumption?

Choose one answer.

- a. Early Church Fathers
- b. The teachings of Paul
- c. Pope Pius XII
- d. Pope John I

(a) Incorrect.

(b) Incorrect.

(c) Correct. Pope Pius XII was born on 2 March 1876 and died 9 October 1958. These dates make the doctrine of Bodily Assumption a relatively new belief in Catholic theology.

(d) Incorrect

**16** Catholics believe that Mary has an intercessory role in salvation.

Answer:

True  False

(a) True - Correct. Catholics think that Mary can intercede with her son, and give one who prays to her salvation as a mediator between the sinner and her son.

(b) False - Incorrect. Sadly, it is true that there are many Catholics that believe Mary plays an important part in granting salvation to sinners. Remarkably, even her son had to die as a sacrifice for sinners; yet, according to the false doctrine of bodily assumption, Mary escapes death and yet is thought to have the right of mediation and intercession for the salvation of sinners.

**17** The role of Mary using her special powers of invocation, intercession and mediation to influence her Son's judgment is a biblical representation of salvation through Him.

Answer:

True  False

(a) True - Incorrect. The salvation of Jesus Christ is all a sinner needs to obtain forgiveness, salvation, justification, and eternal life. Going through another, even his beloved and blessed Mother, is not necessary to receive the grace of salvation promised by God through the acceptance of His Son's sacrifice upon the cross for sinners. There is no biblical support of this false representation of Mary's power.

(b) False - Correct. There is no biblical support for Mary as an intercessor between man and the Lord Jesus Christ. The sacrifice of Jesus Christ upon the cross for sinners is sufficient to save all that embrace Him as Lord and Savior.

**18** What doctrines attempt to establish Mary as a co-god with her Son? (Might be multiple answers)

Choose at least one answer.

- a. Bodily Assumption
- b. Immaculate Conception
- c. Perpetual Virginity
- d. Adoration and Veneration Practices
- e. Invocation Role

(a) Correct. By falsely suggesting that Mary raised to Heaven without death to her physical body once again makes her superior to Christ that was crucified and died, with His shed blood a requirement for the salvation of men. When Mary is falsely attributed with qualities superior to Christ, and given intercessory role in redemption of her Son's blood, she becomes not only a co-god, but a superior one over the Lord Jesus Christ.

(b) Correct. This false teaching makes a sinless Mary, able to function as an unblemished lamb for salvation sacrifice, without the need to sacrifice herself for the sins of mankind.

(c) Correct. This false teaching actually elevates her above her Son by making her so pure as to suggest that she never succumbs to her human nature while her Son, Jesus Christ, fully embraces both the human and the divine nature that He possessed. While examples of Christ's humanness do not deal with this subject in biblical accounts, there is no evidence that He elevates his human nature above others and changes the very nature that normal mankind exhibits. For perpetual virginity to exist, especially when the Word of God clearly reports Mary's additional children, suggests a supernatural event that just did not occur.

(d) Correct. The adoration and veneration of Mary by the Roman Catholic Church brings prayerful attention and worship to her at the expense of the Lord Jesus Christ. This false teaching muddies the role of Christ, and elevates His mother to a place that is not supported by Scripture and refutes the sufficiency of Christ.

(e) Correct. Jesus Christ is sufficient and has no need to be persuaded to invoke the right of forgiveness and judgment of sinners.

**19** The Bible does not say whether departed believers in the Lord can hear or answer words prayed to them.

Answer:

True  False

(a) True - Correct. While there is some indication that the rich man in hell can communicate with his servant who is in Abraham's bosom, there is no specific reference of the Lord's believers communicating in the same manner. (Luke 16:19-31)

(b) False - False. Many will think about the parable that Jesus speaks in Luke 16:19-31 with the rich man in hell crying out to Lazarus, his servant who abides in Abraham's bosom, shows communication between the dead. In a sense, it does. However, it speaks of those under Abraham's covenant, and not for those resurrected into eternal life through the New Covenant of Jesus Christ. That lack of evidence prevents a certain belief that prayers can be directed to those that have died before us. Regardless, the prayers of devout believers should be directed to their Lord and their God.

**20** What do those of Protestant faith hold concerning the sufficiency of Christ and the role that Mary plays in the process of salvation?

Choose one answer.

- a. Protestants believe that the cross finishes the work of Christ
- b. Protestants do not pray to Mary, saints, or those that have died
- c. Protestants purposely avoid offering devotion, adoration, veneration and prayers to Mary
- d. All of the above

(a) Correct. Protestants declare that believers can boldly approach the throne of grace without an intermediary. (Hebrews 4:16)

(b) Correct. Protestant faithful focus their prayers and their attention upon their Lord and God.

(c) Correct. Protestants make a point of avoiding devotional acts or requests of Mary, because it is thought to be an idolatrous posture and practice often seen in Catholic worship.

(d) Correct. The revelation of Mary through God's Word magnifies her special nature that pleases God so much, that He chooses her to be the mother of the Son of God. There is no need to make Mary a co-god with the false teachings of perpetual virginity, immaculate conception, bodily assumption, invocation of Mary, adoration and veneration, or tasking her with an intercessory role. God did not choose a goddess to bear the Son of God. He chose a young virgin girl who ponders when facing spiritual things she does not fully understand, and trusts that whether she understands or not, God is good and faithful, and she has nothing to fear; the Son of God comes to redeem her and us from original sin. We should think of her with honor

and blessings for her faithful carrying of our Lord in our womb that brings salvation to sinners and grants them eternal life through belief in the Son of God.