

RECOGNIZE THE GIFT

First, we start at the beginning: **Genesis 3:15**. We know that Adam and Eve fell, resulting in the curses... including the curse to the devil. However, immediately we hear the protoevangelium, the first Gospel. God said that he will crush the head of the serpent, that is evil. Recognize Eve's role in our fall. God does not give the curse until Adam fell, however Eve had a significant role. It was through that Adam came to eat of the forbidden fruit. In the protoevangelium we hear that there is a new Woman who will have a significant role in our redemption.

Mary is called the **New Eve**, in part because Mary "undoes" Eve's actions. (Jesus, of course, is the New Adam.) Eve was not given her name until after the fall. While Eve was still sinless, she was always called woman. Therefore, we have the sinless woman of Genesis (Eve), and the sinless Woman of the New Testament (Mary). Only Mary was conceived without sin. Mary's role, we must be clear, is only significant or necessary because God chose it. It was not absolutely necessary for Jesus to come through Mary and allow her to share in his mission. God could have redeemed us without Mary. But he *chose* to save us through Mary.

Rather than diminishing her significance, and viewing her as "just" an instrument... there is no "just" about it... It is a "big deal" that Jesus chose her. Jesus is the sole redeemer. However, Mary has a significant and even necessary role in our redemption by the Will of God.

In **Luke chapter 1**, we have the story of the Annunciation. Mary said "yes." She could have said "no", she had free will. However, full of grace, she said "yes." Right away Mary has an intimate role in our redemption, Jesus becomes incarnate because she says "yes." When the Angel says, "full of grace" it means "she who has been filled with grace." She has been and will continue to be **full of grace**. She is unique among all human beings, the *only* human person to be immaculately conceived.

Later, in **Luke chapter 2**, Mary and Joseph meet Simeon at the temple. Simeon approaches Mary, not Joseph. Mary is the one with the unique role in our salvation. He says to Mary that a sword shall pierce her heart. This is prophesying that she is not a "puppet" to give birth and then fade away. Her role is intimate and painful.

Except for the finding in the temple, we do not hear of Jesus through his whole private life... thirty years. All we know is that Jesus was at home and obedient to Joseph and Mary. Then, seemingly suddenly, in **John chapter 2**, something happens. Mary and Jesus are at a wedding, and Mary intercedes on behalf of the couple. Jesus says "**Woman**." He is reminding us that this is the woman who was promised us in Genesis, he reminds her that she is about to put the public life in motion, the sword was approaching. But Mary loves the couple. She intercedes by telling the servers to "do whatever he tells you." Mary knows her son and her God so perfectly, that she trusts him. This is the last time we see Mary until the foot of the Cross, except the brief scene that Jesus' "mother and brothers" are outside. Notice, however, that though seen rarely, she is present at every pivotal moment.

Seventeen chapters later, in **John chapter 19**, we find her at the foot of the **Cross**. Jesus appears to have given us everything; he does not even have a covering for his nakedness. Yet, he gives us one more gift: his mother. He says "Woman" behold your son and son behold your mother. He is pointing out the New Eve, Mother of all the living. John takes Mary into his home, or "into his own." It is not merely John taking care of Mary in her old age. He takes her into his way of being, into his life. This is what we are

called to do. For now, remember that the gift is ours to open and cherish, to change us. Will we open it? If we really take Mary into our home, she will impact the way we live our lives and our relationships with Jesus. If not, then something is wrong. We must change our life, as she repeats “Do whatever he tells you.” Every relationship changes you, how much more an intimate relationship with Jesus and his mother?

Finally, in the book of **Revelations**, we see Mary as the Woman and Queen. Our Lady is in the plan of salvation from Genesis to Revelations. It in NO WAY diminishes the glory of God, but rather lifts him up, just as a masterpiece points to and praises the artist. When we talk about Mary, we give glory to God, because Mary is the masterpiece and God is the Master Artist, the Creator. We give thanks to God for this masterpiece.