

↳ Christmas matters, we know Jesus wasn't born this time of year, but He was born, and His birth marks world changing events. 1) Marks the place in eternity where the nature of God is forever changed. God becomes one of us forever, forever in the past He was not, He was Spirit only but from that advent and forever in the future He will be a man. 2) Marks God's first invasion of the earth. He invaded through the womb of a virgin! How weird is that? In great humility and complete love to rescue us. 3) Marks the prototype of God's second and final invasion of earth. We now have a prototype of How God invades: (1.) He predicts it, over three hundred prophecies of Jesus' first coming to earth in the Old Testament. There are eight times as many of His second coming. (2) He says what He means. Predicted a virgin birth and that it is what happened. His predictions for His second coming will be fulfilled literally as well. Christmas matters! But there are many things about that first Christmas and the players in that story that are misunderstood. The two people that were most central to the great adventure are some of the most misunderstood and we are going to take a look at them over the next two Sundays leading up to Christmas. First, we are going to take a look at Mary.

1. On average, Mary is either overestimated or underestimated.

- ✓ Mary is absolutely central to the divine drama, but some overestimate her role. To be certain, Mary plays a role in Jesus' birth but no other role in our redemption beyond that. Not only is Mary not in any way a savior, but she was in need, like the rest of us, of salvation, listen to her own words: Luke 1:46-48. She needed her sins forgiven like everybody else, so don't overestimate Mary. Do not underestimate Mary's role either!

2. We know at least four things about Mary's life at the time of this Great Adventure that are especially noteworthy.

- ✓ She was in all likelihood a teenager, she was poor, she was a devout believer in God, and she was in love. Her name isn't actually Mary but Miriam after the sister of Moses in the Old Testament. And the meaning of her name is quite shocking: Miriam means "rebel." Original Miriam, Moses' sister, rebelled against the king of Egypt to preserve her baby brother. This would be the biggest to do of her life; preparations for it would take as much as year, Luke 1:26-27. At this point, God enters the scene and effectively asks her to give up all her dreams to be a part of what He was doing in time and eternity. Gone are her dreams, her plans, in their place are rumors of an illegitimate birth, a hush-hush shotgun wedding, all the friends and family she looked forward to celebrating with won't be there.

3. The Angel proceeds to tell her she's not in Kansas anymore!

Put yourselves in the sandals of teenager and hear what she hears: Luke 1:28-33. She's going to become pregnant immediately, that she understood it that way is made clear by her question: Luke 1:34. The child would fulfill all the hopes of her ancestors and the writings of their sacred book, including the ones that said He would be none other than God incarnate. She was to become immediately pregnant with the physical body of God! From an uninformed angle, God looks like the biggest gambler who ever was because He hangs the entire future of creation on the answer of teenager! Of course, God is sovereign and all-knowing and is no gambler, but from a worldly angle, this is a big risk.

4. Mary's response: Luke 1:38. Several things about her answer for us to observe:

- 1) She accepts the role that we all need to accept voluntary slave of God, that's literally what the Greek says she calls herself a "Doulos" which in the Greek means "slave by choice," she had a choice, and she made hers. She says it quick enough here without any cajoling or convincing which indicates that she's thought about it before, she'd already made a conscious decision to be whatever God wanted her to be, smart girl!
 - 2) She willing sacrifices her dreams. She allows God to rearrange her entire life: Looses a special event along with all the hopes that were a part of it. She adds to herself the difficult days ahead of telling her parents and her husband to be, she subjects herself to public ridicule for the biggest part of the rest of her life.
 - 3) She says yes to the impossible "may it be done unto me as you have said," with that, Christmas came to world!
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