

Be It Unto Me

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One of the most unusual and surprising things about the birth narrative of Jesus as told through the lens of the gospel writers is the figure of Jesus' mother, Mary. Venerated the world over, she has become a symbol and a saint; someone misunderstood and argued over by those within the faith community and from the outside. Yet, who was she?

What's fascinating about the story is Mary's complete lack of credentials. She is a young girl growing up in a backwater little town called Nazareth with nothing abundantly remarkable about her in any way. She is not a queen, she is not in a mansion or a palace, she is not in a capital city or religious temple. And yet this almost anonymous young girl will display remarkable trust in the Lord, even though the risk of such trust would likely be significant.

Here, in Nazareth, this distant descendant of Ruth will provide generations of Christians a model of steadfast and unwavering faith in the promise of God, against all odds. In a first-century culture where infidelity and promiscuity were not only crimes against the community, they carried immense shame that could linger beyond ones' lifetime, Mary risks it all on her God. As the angel of Lord declares that this beyond unbelievable birth will take place and that this birth will indeed bring about the arrival of God's chosen and anointed one into the world, Mary had every reason to be flooded with doubt, insecurity, anxiety, fear, and disbelief. And yet, a simple pronouncement of trust, "Be it unto me according to thy word." (KJV)

Be It Unto Me is an expression of trust, a statement that no matter what the Lord may ask and no matter what may come, my trust is in him, he is the one who is worthy of my life, he is the one I will obey. It is a 'stake in the ground' moment for any who would carry the mantle of Mary in obedience to God, declaring "I am the Lord's *servant*." (The Greek word being translated 'servant' is the word *doulē*, which means 'slave' or 'bondslave'.)