

# Christmas Message 2020

Pastor James Foley – Shared Sunday, December 20, 2020

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## INTRODUCTIONS

Thank you for joining us today and Merry Christmas! It is my joy to bring forth this Sunday morning message, as we gather to celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. May the Spirit of Christ open our hearts to receive, embrace and apply His Holy Word!

## SETTING THE STAGE PT. 1

A series of timeless characters appear in the birth narratives of Christ—perhaps none more central than that of Mary. Consider that this young girl, a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, was told she would supernaturally (i.e., immaculately) conceive a child who would change the course of human history—a child who would be called the Son of the Most High God, reigning over a kingdom that would never end (cf. Luke 1:31–33).

**Q. What did Mary feel toward this singular calling (i.e., beyond a willingness to be used of God)?**

**KEY** – More importantly for the sake of our discussion this morning...

**Q. What did Mary know or understand regarding the unique nature and mission of her child?**

## SETTING THE STAGE PT. 2

This is a question that has fascinated scholars and students of Scripture for ages. In many ways, the answer will forever elude us as the Word of God reveals only the following concerning Mary and her response to the prophetic messages she received about her son, Jesus...

### **Luke 2:19 (NIV)**

19 . . . Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.

**NOTE 1** – Of course, this has not stopped us from speculating, “What did Mary know?” In fact, one of the more famous songs of the holiday season causes us to wonder at the depth and breadth of Mary’s insight through a series of unanswered questions: i.e., “Mary, Did You Know?”

**NOTE 2** – I have chosen not to play a recording of this song today, as a great many have certainly heard it beforehand. I have chosen not to sing this song for you, as I do not want to drive you away by my lack of vocal capacity. I have, however, chosen to reflect upon the lyrics of this song with you, as the themes they touch upon are worthy of our corporate attention.

**FYI** – I have provided the lyrics to the song for those present (i.e., should you wish to take note or follow along).

Let us delve in...

## Question #1

**Q. How does the song open? What is the opening lyric to the song?**

**A.** “Mary, did you know that your baby boy would one day walk on water?”

**Q. Did Mary perceive Jesus’ power over the elements as she held Him in her arms?**

**KEY** – The Christ-child would in time wield such power—as evidenced in the following account . . .

### **Matthew 14:22–27, 32–33**

22 . . . Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. 23 After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone, 24 and the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.

25 Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. 26 When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. “It’s a ghost,” they said, and cried out in fear.

27 But Jesus immediately said to them: “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.”

32 And when [He] climbed into the boat, the wind died down. 33 Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”

**Q. . . . Yet was this something that Mary comprehended?**

## Question #2

**Q. Did Mary know—i.e., as the song continues—that her “baby boy would save our sons and daughters”?**

**Q. Did she perceive that her child would be the source of eternal life to the lost sons and daughters of man?**

**Q. Did she understand the ‘core’ of the gospel message that you and I believe and proclaim centuries later?**

**Q. What gospel message? What “good news”?**

### **John 3:16**

16 [that] God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

**KEY** – As Christ Himself would proclaim in His adult life and ministry...

### **Luke 19:10**

10 “For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

Similarly...

### Question #3

**Q. Did Mary know that Christ had come to offer rescue and renewal (as the song queries)?**

“Did you know that your baby boy has come to make you new?  
This child that you delivered, will soon deliver you.”

**NOTE** – These lyrics speak to the power of Christ to deliver us from both the penalty and power of sin. Consider...

#### **1) We Are All Guilty Before God and Liable to Divine Judgment**

**Romans 3:23a**

23 . . . all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God . . .

**Romans 6:23a**

23 For the wages of sin is death . . .

#### **2) We are Fallen Creatures Who are Inclined unto Sin**

**John 8:34**

34 Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin.”

Romans 7:18–19

18 For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. 19 For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing.

Yet...

#### **3) Christ Offers Divine Pardon to Those Who Believe**

**Romans 6:23**

23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

#### **4) Christ Offers a New Heart to Those Who Believe (Power to Serve Him)**

**2 Corinthians 5:17**

17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

**Ezekiel 36:26–27**

26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

**Q. . . . Yet was this something that Mary understood?**

### Question #4

**Q. Did Mary know that her baby boy would “give sight” to those who were blind?**

**Q. Did she perceive the power that Christ would demonstrate over malady and affliction?**

**KEY** – The Christ-child would in time wield such divine power—as evidenced in the following account . . .

**Luke 18:35–43**

35 As Jesus approached Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging. 36 When he heard the crowd going by, he asked what was happening. 37 They told him, “Jesus of Nazareth is passing by.”

38 He called out, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”

39 Those who led the way rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”

40 Jesus stopped and ordered the man to be brought to him. When he came near, Jesus asked him, 41 “What do you want me to do for you?”

“Lord, I want to see,” he replied.

42 Jesus said to him, “Receive your sight; your faith has healed you.” 43 Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus, praising God. When all the people saw it, they also praised God.

**Q. . . . Yet was this something that Mary anticipated?**

### Question #5

Moving onward in this Christmas classic...

**Q. Did Mary know that her baby boy would “calm a storm with His hand”?**

**KEY** – The Christ would—again—come to wield power over the elements of this world—as evidenced herein...

**Mark 4:35–41**

35 That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, “Let us go over to the other side.” 36 Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. 37 A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. 38 Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, “Teacher, don’t you care if we drown?”

39 He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, “Quiet! Be still!” Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. 40 He said to his disciples, “Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?”

41 They were terrified and asked each other, “Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!”

**Q. . . . Yet was this something that Mary could foresee?**

## Question #6

**Q. Did Mary know that her “baby boy” had “walked where angels trod”?**

**NOTE** – Did Mary understand the Pre-Incarnate glory of Jesus Christ? Note that Christ did not “begin to exist” at conception, as we do. Rather, He descended from heavenly glory and took upon Himself a human form at conception. For all of eternity past, Jesus had known the wonders of heaven (i.e., that place “where angels trod”).

**KEY** – Consider that Christ referred to this reality on the night of His betrayal...

**John 17:5 (Emphasis Mine)**

5 . . . Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you **before the world began**.

**Q. . . . Yet was this a reality that Mary perceived?**

## Question #7

**Q. Did Mary perceive that when she kissed her child “she kissed the face of God”?**

**Q. Did she understand the true nature of Christ and the wonder of His Incarnation?**

**Q. What is the “Incarnation”?**

**A.** The miracle of God “becoming” man.

**KEY** – Scripture identifies the unique nature of Jesus Christ...

**John 1:1, 14a (Emphasis Mine)**

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word **was God**.

14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

**Hebrews 1:3a**

3 The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being . . .

**John 14:9b (Christ Speaking to His Own)**

“Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.”

**Q. Yet is this something that Mary knew rightly?**

## Question #8

**Q. Did Mary recognize the capacity of her son's ability to change lives for time and eternity?**

**Q. Did Mary recognize that her child would be praised by those who were changed by Him?**

**NOTE** – As the bridge of this song beautifully declares...

"The blind will see, the deaf will hear, the dead will live again,  
The lame will leap, the dumb will speak the praises of the Lamb!"

**KEY** – John the Revelator foresaw the coming, glorious worship of God and the Christ...

### **Revelation 7:9–10**

9 After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. 10 And they cried out in a loud voice:

"Salvation belongs to our God,  
who sits on the throne,  
and to the Lamb."

**Q. . . . Yet did Mary foresee such healing, renewal, transformation and eternal praise?**

## Question #9

**Q. Did Mary know that her "baby boy" was "Lord of all creation" (i.e., destined to "rule the nations")?**

**NOTE** – This lyric speaks to the dominion of Christ—i.e., particularly the dominion He will establish at His Return.

### **Isaiah 9:6–7**

6 For to us a child is born,  
to us a son is given,  
and the government will be on his shoulders.  
And he will be called  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.  
7 Of the greatness of his government and peace  
there will be no end.  
He will reign on David's throne  
and over his kingdom,  
establishing and upholding it  
with justice and righteousness  
from that time on and forever.  
The zeal of the Lord Almighty  
will accomplish this.

**Daniel 7:13–14**

13 “In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. 14 He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

**Q. . . . Yet was this something that Mary comprehended?**

**Question #10**

**Q. Did Mary know that her baby boy was heaven’s “perfect Lamb”?**

**Q1. Did she know that His life would be characterized by selfless service?**

**Matthew 20:28a (Emphasis Mine)**

28 . . . “the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to **serve** . . .

**Q2. Did she know that her child would give His life as the “sacrifice” for our sin? i.e., Substitute?**

**Matthew 20:28 (Emphasis Mine)**

28 . . . “the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to **give his life** as a ransom for many.”

**John 1:29 (Emphasis Mine)**

John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the **Lamb of God**, who takes away the sin of the world!”

**2 Corinthians 5:21**

21 God made him who had no sin to be sin [lit. “a sin offering”] for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

**Q. . . . Yet did Mary realize that Jesus would take our place—i.e., and her place—in death (that we might live)?**

**Question #11**

**Q. Did Mary realize that the sleeping child she held was—in fact—the “Great I Am”?**

**NOTE** – “I Am” was the sacred name for God amongst the ancient Jewish people. It appears throughout the whole of the Old Testament (i.e., often translated as “LORD”). This was the name God used to reveal Himself to Moses in the account of the burning bush. Christ connects Himself with this name in the following text...

**John 8:58 (Emphasis Mine)**

58 “Very truly I tell you,” Jesus answered, “before Abraham was born, **I am!**”

**KEY** – The “I Am” who sent Moses to rescue the Jews from bondage in Egypt had come Himself—in human form—to deliver His people from the bondage of sin and death. It is in Christ that we, therefore, find spiritual liberty, release, renewal and life (i.e., eternal and abundant).

**Q. . . . Yet did Mary recognize the splendorous nature of the child that slept in her arms?**

## SUMMATIONS PT. 1

As I close...

**Q. What did Mary know about her child?**

**Q. What did she understand re: His nature or work?**

**A.** We genuinely do not know (i.e., as Scripture is silent on these matters)!

**KEY** – However, I think a more pressing and urgent question is, “What do you know?”...

**Q. What do you know about Jesus Christ?**

**Q. What do you believe to be true about Him?**

**Q. How does this knowledge inform and impact?**

## SUMMATIONS PT. 2

**Q1.** Do you recognize His divine power? Do you know that the One who walked on water, calmed the storm, gave sight to the blind, raised the dead and more is still alive and well (i.e., willing to work the miraculous on the behalf of those who look to Him)?

**Q2.** Do you realize that Jesus is still able and willing to deliver you from the penalty of sin, rescue you from the power of sin, restore you to relationship with God and grant you the fulness of life—i.e., life abundant and life eternal? This is the “good news” or the “gospel” that we proclaim!

**Q3.** Do you know that Jesus Christ is coming again to establish a rule/reign that shall be blessed and “eternal”?

**Q4.** Do you recognize that a time is coming when all who have been touched and changed by Him throughout space and time will assemble to give Him the praise He deserves (i.e., an assembly that will continue time without end)?

**Q5.** Do you realize that the child we celebrate at Christmas grew up to give His life for you that you might live forever with Him? Do you understand that the “I Am” who sent Moses to save His people from Egypt took it upon Himself to come and save you from death, hell and the grave!

**KEY** – In some ways it doesn’t matter what Mary knew in centuries past. What matters is what you know today...

**PRAYER...**



## CONCLUSIONS

**NOTE** – The 2020 Annual Business Meeting will take place on Sunday, January 24, 2021 following the Sunday Service (January 31 in case of inclement weather). Nomination forms necessary to nominate individuals for the elected offices of Deacon and Trustee on our church Board—whose terms expire at the Annual Meeting—must be completed today. Your completed forms must be placed in the designated box located on the table in the front foyer before you leave. Also, the deadline for the submission of Ministry Leader Reports is Sunday, January 3, 2021.

Thank you for taking the time to join us today. Should those of you who have joined us online wish to give, please do so through the giving portal of our church website ([www.NewLifeBarre.org](http://www.NewLifeBarre.org)). For those who are present, you may place your donation in one of our offering boxes.

Numbers 6:24–26

24 The Lord bless you

and keep you;

25 the Lord make his face shine on you

and be gracious to you;

26 the Lord turn his face toward you

and give you peace.