

Was Mary the Mother of God?

Peter Ditzel

There are millions of Catholics and others around the world who believe that Mary was the mother of God. But is this belief supported by Scripture?

First, I want to point out that not one Scripture in all the Bible states that Mary was the mother of God. The Bible only says that Mary was the mother of Jesus. But, you may say, Jesus is God, so doesn't that make Mary the mother of God? Let's see.

Two Attributes of God

Two of the attributes of God are that He is self-existent and eternal. In John 5:26, Jesus said, "For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself." This completely agrees with what Moses learned of God at the burning bush. When Moses asked God His name so that he could tell it to the children of Israel, God replied, "I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you" (Exodus 3:14).

Notice these Psalms that tell of God's eternity: "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God" (Psalm 90:2); "Thy throne is established of old: thou art from everlasting" (Psalm 93:2); "Blessed be the LORD God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting: and let all the people say, Amen. Praise ye the LORD" (Psalm 106:48). Similarly, Isaiah 40:28 states, "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding."

God needs nothing and no one; His existence comes from no one; He has always existed. Speaking specifically of Jesus as God, Colossians 1:17 says, "And he is before all things, and by him all things consist." Also speaking of Jesus as God, John writes, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:1-3). How can Mary be the mother of the One who made all things?

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Certainly, as John goes on to explain in verse 14, the Word became flesh, and Mary had her part in giving Jesus His human nature. But it is notable that John describes His glory as "the glory as of the only begotten of the Father." No mention is made of His mother. She is not the mother of His glory because that is attached to His God nature, and she did not supply that. Only God supplied Jesus' God nature. Mary is not the mother of God.

Notice Paul's speech to the Athenians in Acts 17:23-31 (caps are in the original, but I will use bold to emphasize certain points):

For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. God that **made the world and all things therein**, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands, **as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things**; And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: For **in him we live, and move, and have our being**; as certain also of your own poets have said, **For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God**, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device. And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

If God made the world and all things, if He needs nothing, if he gives life and breath and all things to all, if in Him we live and move and have our being, if we are His offspring, then how can Mary—who is one of us—be His mother, making God her offspring? It is not possible as this would give Mary precedence over God. We should also note that by definition, parents are prior to their offspring. But, as we have seen, God predates Mary. Therefore, it is impossible for her to be God's mother.

No human woman can be the mother of a cow or horse or dog or cat. She can only be the mother of a human. Even if the fertilized egg of an animal were to be implanted into her womb, and it somehow grew to the point of her giving birth to it (please excuse the grotesqueness), she would still not be its mother. Even when a fertilized human egg is implanted into a woman's womb, and she did not supply the ovum, although she may give birth to that baby, she is not its biological mother.

In the case of Jesus, we are dealing with something unique. Jesus had two natures, God and human. God supplied the God nature, and Mary supplied the human nature. Mary was human and could only have been the mother of what was human. She was merely one human female whom God chose to provide the human nature of Jesus so that He could live, suffer, and die for the elect people of God. To call her the Mother of God exalts her to the status of a sort of goddess, or at least places her higher than all other human beings. But Jesus did not treat her that way. When she and her other children came to see Jesus, He didn't exalt her. Instead, He said, "Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother" (Matthew 12:48-50). On another occasion, "a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked. But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it" (Luke 11:27-28). Instead of saying that Mary was somehow special above other humans, Jesus used both occasions to show that He considered His real family to be those who hear the Word of God and keep it, doing the will of His Father in heaven. The Bible contains no examples of Jesus treating His mother as if she had some special status.

God has used many people throughout history to fulfill His purposes and perform certain roles. Mary was one of these people. God used her, a human woman, to enable the Word to be born flesh and dwell among us (John 1:14). But her fulfilling this role did not make her the mother of God or make her any more special than anyone who is obedient to the Word of God.

Let's read Matthew 22:42-46, where Jesus speaks:

Saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The Son of David. He saith unto them, How

then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son? And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions.

So, was Jesus the son of David? Yes, as a human, Jesus was descended from David. But Jesus' point in these verses is to show that He is also God and that His God nature was most certainly NOT a son (or descendent) of David. We can see this even more clearly by following the suggestion of John Schroeder in "Scriptural Proof: Mary is Not the Mother of God" (<http://www.contenderministries.org/Catholicism/marymother.php>):

To prove this beyond a shadow of a doubt, let us insert Mary's name in place of King David's in the previously cited Scriptures:

*"While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, Saying, What think ye of Christ? whose **son** is he? They say unto him, The son of **MARY**. He saith unto them, How then doth **MARY** call him Lord, saying, My soul doth magnify the Lord, And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. (Luke 1:46, 47) If **MARY** then call him Lord, how is he her son? And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions."*

Most certainly, Mary was the mother of Jesus Christ, the man who lived for some thirty years and died on the Cross. Yes, in Jesus was a uniting of two natures, God and human. But Mary was no more the mother of God than God died on the Cross. What died on the Cross was Jesus in His human nature, the nature that Mary was the mother of. Jesus' God nature was self-existent, eternal, from God, and Mary was not the mother of it.

Catholics reading this might charge me with separating the two natures of Christ. But I have not separated the two natures of Christ. In Jesus Christ, the God nature and the human nature are united in the one Person, Jesus Christ. All I have done is distinguish His parents as the origins of His natures. God is the origin of His God nature. Mary is the origin of His human nature. Therefore, God is the Father of Jesus Christ's God nature, and Mary is the mother of Jesus Christ's human

nature. In Jesus Christ, these natures are united, so that God is His Father and Mary is His mother. But Mary is not the mother of God.

You might be interested in reading our related article, "Did Mary Have Other Children?" (<http://www.wordofhisgrace.org/marychildren.htm>).