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**GRACE NOTES Radio Program
The Christmas Story
Part 2: What did Mary know?
SONGS: MARY DID YOU KNOW
TEN THOUSAND JOYS**

INTRO: Welcome to Grace Notes. On our last program, Barbara Sandbek began a series on the Christmas Story. She talked about some of the players and their roles. We learned that God's ways are not our ways, and that He chooses people to do His work, based on Godly character, rather than on outward appearance or status in life. Today, Barbara will continue with the other players, and begin the reading of the Christmas story.

**What were God's qualifications for the part of Christ's mother?
She had to be a virgin, live a Godly life, and have great faith.
More than that, she had to be willing to play the part exactly as written.**

God chose Mary, a common servant girl. She lived a holy life and was ready to DELIVER God's message. She was about fourteen years old. This tells me that...

WE ARE NEVER TOO YOUNG TO BE USED OF GOD!

Think of it...a servant girl chosen to bear the GREATEST SERVANT of all times.

Let me paint the picture for you.

Mary was engaged. In those days it was almost like being married, though without the physical union. In fact, if you wanted out, a decree of divorcement had to be issued. Though Mary was poor, she probably was still planning a festive wedding. It was an exciting time.

**Now...an angel appeared and said she would be with child? What could this mean for her; public disgrace...Joseph might leave her?
She asked, "How could this be when I am a virgin?" She questioned to understand – not to challenge God. The angel explained that the Holy Spirit would overshadow her and she would conceive and bear the Messiah.**

What was her response? She said,

"I am the Lord's servant. May it be to me as You have said."

Do we challenge God with the questions we ask?

True faith does not demand all the details!

God had the angel tell her only what she needed to know, and gave her grace for the moment. That was best for her, and it's best for us, too. Really now, if we knew all the details about the future, we either wouldn't want to wait, or we couldn't bear it.

Could Mary have handled knowing what she was going to have to go through? I think not. Even the events of the birth must have been confusing to her as she pondered.

***** MARY DID YOU KNOW *** 3:35**

Joseph, was a back-stage person, who stuck by Mary, though his reputation was at stake. He married a pregnant woman? He sacrificed, too, in that he had no union with her until Christ was born.

God needs more supportive, behind-the-scenes people in His service!

So the time came for the story to unfold. Let's read it from Luke Chapter 2.

And it came to pass in those days that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed. And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was Governor of Syria. And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be taxed with Mary His espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was that while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

Mary's task hard enough, but it was complicated by the fact that she had to travel, at full term, on a donkey, some ninety miles (at least a 3 day journey). Any woman who's been pregnant, knows how uncomfortable riding on anything can be at that stage, much less on a donkey. She was taxed in more ways than one. And she didn't have the comforts of a sanitary delivery room, sedation to ease the pain, or a midwife to help her deliver, as was the custom. Worst of all, she had no mom to tell her how to handle a new baby. Here's the setting. They were in Bethlehem – no big name town, just an obscure village in the middle of nowhere.

It wasn't a pretty scene either, like the porcelain figurines portray.

The Ramada Inns were full, and so were the Budget Inns, so they were relegated to what early tradition says was a cave used as a stable. It was probably warm, though. Cattle were often kept inside in cold weather, so the heat from the animals would have made it so. But though animals are great company, they don't always smell very good. I know, I had a horse.

The Scripture continues...

And she brought forth her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

No newborn outfit for her special child. They wrapped him in bands of cloth, a practice thought to make the bones stronger. I've also read that these types of cloths were used to wrap the dead in.

Did his crib have a soft mattress and a matching bumper pad to cushion his fragile head? No, they laid him on hay, in a manger – which was a feeding trough frequently hewn out of the cave wall. Interesting...

Jesus, the Bread of Life, spent His first night on earth in a feeding trough.

What was it like for the God of all Creation to become a helpless baby in the arms of a young woman?

There was no fanfare for the GOD of CREATION...just a quiet night – but a night that changed all of time.

What a night it must have been!

What a child He must have been!

***** TEN THOUSAND JOYS *****

Thanks for joining the program.

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Sandbek Ministries

P.O. Box 581

Fallston, MD 21047

or email us through our web site at www.gracenotesradiocom.

Why not send along a Christmas gift to support this ministry?

Join us on our next program - we'll continue with the Christmas Story.