

Hail Mary?

By Greg Durel

The prayer life of the Roman Catholic is quite different from the Bible believing Christian. The predominant prayer in the life of almost any Catholic is the "Hail Mary."

It goes like this: "HAIL MARY FULL OF GRACE, THE LORD IS WITH THEE. BLESSED ART THOU AMONG WOMEN AND BLESSED IS THE FRUIT OF THY WOMB, JESUS. HOLY MARY, MOTHER OF GOD, PRAY FOR US SINNERS, NOW AND AT THE HOUR OF OUR DEATH. AMEN."

The statements made in this prayer are quite significant. Allow us to look at them one at a time and compare them with the word of God to see if there is a basis for such a prayer at all.

1) **Hail Mary**—The word "hail" brings with it today the connotation of royalty, nobility and power. It is a greeting given to someone of great power, influence and preeminence. We know very well that is the position that Roman Catholicism places on Mary. For example: the principle form for most Catholics is the "rosary."

The rosary is a system of beads where a prayer is said for each bead. The beads are a way to count the prayers and to know where and when to say a particular prayer. In this "rosary," ten prayers are said to Mary for every one that is said to God the Father. In other words Mary is preeminent ten to one over God! Mary is referred to as the "mother of the church," "the second Eve," "the queen of heaven." The queen of the universe, "co-redemptrix," "co-mediator," and if that were not enough, the head of the Roman Catholic Church has dedicated the world on at least two occasions, not to the savior Jesus Christ, but to Mary. When he was shot in an assassination attempt, he thanked and credited Mary with saving him! Attributing praise and worship to humans that have no basis to receive such is not uncommon in forms of religious and political paganism, e.g., "Hail Caesar" or "Hail Hitler."

2) **Full of Grace**—Wow! What a statement. The teaching is clear. Mary was not ordinary, but was in fact "full" of grace. She must have been special to be "full of grace," right? What does God's word have to say on the matter? John chapter 1 is like a giant spotlight on this subject. It clearly tells us that Jesus Christ is the one that is full of grace. Mary is never said to be full of grace in the scripture. John goes on to tell us in verse 16 that we are all full of His grace and truth, because all believers have Jesus dwelling within them. Only in this sense could Mary have been full of grace. The grace would have been the savior she carried in her womb and after Pentecost, the spirit of Christ that lives in every believer.

3) **The Lord is with thee**—The Lord is with every believer or they are not in fact a believer (Rom. 8:9).

4) **Blessed art thou among women**—While this statement is certainly biblical, it must be understood in the light of biblical truth and not as a result of subjective interpretation.

The New Testament was written in "koine" Greek as opposed to classical. There are several words in the Greek language for blessed. Just like there are several words for "love."

Each having a different meaning or carrying with it a particular connotation. A failure to examine the underlying text is a gross mistake on the part of the student of God's word.

The word translated "blessed" when speaking of Mary is not the same word used when referring to our Lord. The word used for Mary means to pronounce fortunate and indeed she was. On the other hand the word used for blessed when referring to our Lord means to be adored. Quite a difference wouldn't you say? You may even wish to check your concordance to see if there is a woman whom the Bible says is blessed "above" women.

5) **Blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus**—Without a doubt this is the truth that should be the focus: the Lord Jesus, the Messiah and savior of the world. This should be the emphasis and not Mary. Many, though, know not what they worship.

6) **Holy Mary, Mother of God**—What a statement! Is it true? Not by any stretch of the imagination. The Bible clearly teaches that the only HOLY one is God. Mary in what is known as her Magnificat, rejoices in God HER SAVIOR (Lk.1: 47).

Holiness does not need saving. Mary, after the birth of Jesus, offers a sacrifice for HER SINS. Holiness need not offer a sacrifice for sins. Mary, as any believer received her righteousness as a gift from the Father. There was nothing inherently holy about Mary. Even Thomas Aquinas denies the "immaculate conception" of Mary. Regarding the "Mother of God" statement much not need be said. God was not born nor was He created. Mary gave birth to the "humanity" of Jesus.

Jesus was God, because He is God! The statement "Mother of God" developed out of a reaction to the denial of the Deity of Jesus by some. That overreaction has resulted in the tail wagging the dog so to speak. Mary was the vessel by which the incarnation took place but she was not the supplier of Divine chromosomes.

7) **Pray for us sinners**—Mary does not pray for you or me. She does not even know that we exist. If she could know millions and millions of people then she would be a God! While I can pray for you if you were to ask me to, I am alive here on earth. If I would know that you were asking me to pray for you from a thousand miles away, then I would be like God. Do you get the picture? Mary has been clearly given the attributes of God. The adjective "sinners" is used because all good Catholics are still trying to pay for their sin debt. Failing to realize that when Christ said, "it is finished," He meant it. When God the Father declared it through Paul in 2 Corinthians 5:17-20 He certainly was not kidding.

8) **Now and at the hour of our death**—Now," she could not even if she wanted to. "At the hour of our death," why? Please tell me what would be the purpose of such a prayer (if one could be made) at the hour of our death? Further, she again would have to be a "GOD" to know where and when we were going to die.

9) **Amen**—A permanent amen should be given to prayers to anyone other than God.
The Father is to be the recipient of all prayer.

In summary, allow me to say that Mary was a wonderful vessel that the Father used.

Mary was chosen for these reasons:

1. She was a fine, virtuous, faithful to the law Jewish maiden.
2. She was of the "seed" of King David.
3. She was a virgin.

These qualifications were the Biblical reasons to choose her. Not having just one of these prerequisites would have caused God's prophecies to fail. Did Mary play an important role in the Bible? Yes, but so did Noah and Joseph, etc. Remember, Jesus never called Mary Mother. Not even once! No Apostle ever asks her opinion on anything. No one in the Bible ever asks Mary to pray for them. After the first chapter of the fifth book of the New Testament she is never mentioned again and then only in a list of other believers.

Please allow the Scripture to bring you to a true understanding of Mary the Mother of Jesus.