



In Luke 1:47 Mary calls God her “Savior.” If Mary was without sin why would she need a Savior?

Catholic Answer: We all need a Savior who is Jesus Christ. Mary was no different but Mary was saved at her conception by God’s grace in view of the merits of Jesus Christ.

Consider an analogy: “Suppose a man falls into a deep pit and someone reaches down to pull him out. The man has been “saved” from the pit. Now imagine a woman walking along, and she too is about to topple into the pit, but at the very moment that she is to fall in, someone holds her back and prevents her. She too has been saved from the pit, but in an even better way: She was not simply taken out of the pit; she was prevented

from getting stained by the mud in the first place. This is the illustration Christians have used for a thousand years to explain how Mary was saved by Christ. By receiving Christ’s grace at her conception, she had His grace applied to her before she was able to become mired in original sin and its stain.” *From Catholic.com*

Protestant Objection: Romans 3:23 says “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” That includes Mary.

Catholic Answer: If by the word “all” Paul means that absolutely everyone has sinned then that would mean that even Jesus sinned. It would mean that an infant or a mentally disabled person commits personal sins and we know that is not the case. God created Adam, Eve and the angels without sin. There can be exceptions like Mary.

Paul is using the word “all” in a very broad sense just as he does in Romans 11:32 where Paul says, “God has consigned all men to disobedience, that he may have mercy upon all.” Is Paul saying that because God will have mercy on all men there can be no hell, no eternal punishment? Paul is using the word “all” in a broad collective sense just as he does when he says that all have sinned. Paul isn’t ruling out exceptions.

In Romans 5:12 Paul says that because of sin “death spread to all men.”

According to scripture Enoch did not die therefore the word “all” does not rule out exceptions: “By faith Enoch was taken up so that he would not see death.” Hebrews 11:5

In Titus 2:11 Paul says, “For the grace of God has appeared for the salvation of all men....”

Are all men saved? No. Therefore we can say that when Paul says “all have sinned” he knows that there are exceptions. Mary is one of those exceptions.

Basilica of the Immaculate Conception Washington DC



Protestant Objections: Paul says in Romans 3:9-10, “No one is righteous, no not one.” That includes Mary.

Catholic Answer: In Luke 1:6 Luke writes that Zechariah and Elizabeth “were both righteous before God, walking in all of the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blamelessly”. So both Zechariah and Elizabeth were righteous per Scripture.

Paul is quoting from Psalm 14 when he says no one is righteous but in Psalm 18:20 and 18:23 the writer of the Psalms says, “The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness...I was blameless before him and I kept myself from guilt.’

Clearly Paul does not mean that no one is righteous.

In Romans 3 Paul is simply calling attention to how sinful we are. When we separate ourselves from the grace of God we are under the power of sin. Luke 1:15 says that John the Baptist was “filled with the Holy Spirit” while in his mother womb. Was John unrighteous?

Protestant Objection: In Luke 2:22-24 Mary presented an offering to the Jewish priest as prescribed in Leviticus 12 because she was in the state of sin.

Catholic Answer: Mary didn’t go to the Temple because she committed a sin. Mary, as a good Jewish girl, was fulfilling the Jewish Law. As prescribed by Leviticus 12:2-8 a mother was purified forty days after the birth of a son and she was required to offer a lamb as a burnt offering and a young pigeon or turtledove as a sin offering.

The purification had to do with ritual uncleanliness and didn't imply a moral fault in childbirth. Jesus was baptized by John to fulfill the Law even though He had no sins.

Protestant Objection: My bible translation, as well as some Catholic bible translations, of Luke 1:28 say “highly favored one” not “full of grace.”

Catholic Answer: While “highly favored one” is ‘technically’ a correct translation, it is not a ‘sufficient’ translation because it doesn't convey the nuances that occur in the original Greek. In other words, “highly favored one” is a correct but mediocre translation, “full of grace” is a correct and much better translation.

The Greek word ‘kecharitomene’ in Luke 1:28 is a perfect passive participle which means it refers to something that is an essential part of Mary's very being... that she is full of grace and is so as an intrinsic part of who she is. Saint Jerome, who spoke Greek, translated that word as “full of grace” in his Latin translation in AD 390.

Protestant Objection: In Acts 6:8 it says that Stephen was “full of grace.”

Catholic Answer: A different Greek word is used there with a different tense. Stephen was filled with grace as a matter of an outside action working on him in that moment. The word used for Mary indicates a permanent ongoing endowment of grace.

Protestant Objection: Mary is not the woman in Genesis 3:15

Catholic Answer: After the fall of Adam and Eve in Genesis 3, God promised the advent of another "woman" in Genesis 3:15, or a "New Eve" who would oppose Lucifer, and whose "seed" would crush his head. This "woman" and "her seed" would reverse the curse, so to speak, that the original "man" and "woman" had brought upon humanity through their disobedience. God said He would put enmity, total hatred, total opposition, between Satan and this woman. There was no hatred or opposition between Satan and Eve who cooperated with Satan and disobeyed God. Mary cooperated fully with God with her "yes" to become the Mother of God. Enmity between Mary and Satan would also mean that Mary was without sin.

Mary as co-redemptrix



Mary as co-redemptrix is a doctrine of the Church but has not risen to the level of an infallible dogma like the Immaculate Conception or the Assumption.

"Co" is from the Latin "cum," meaning "with". "Trix" is a feminine suffix, so the word means "the woman with the redeemer"---the woman with the one doing the act of redemption.

This does not mean that Mary is equal to Jesus and it does not mean that Mary has an equal share in the redemption of the human family. This would be a heresy.

Protestant Objection: Calling Mary a co-redemptrix makes her equal to Jesus. Only Jesus can save.

Catholic Answer: Can you save anyone?

Protestant Objection: No. Only Jesus saves.

Catholic Answer: According to scripture we can save ourselves and others.

1 Timothy 4:16: "Take heed to yourself and to your teaching: hold to that, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers."

1 Corinthians 9:22: "I have become all things to all men that I might by all means save some."

James 5:20: "let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins. "

Can we save ourselves and others in the same way that Jesus saves? Of course not! Only Jesus can save but we can participate in his work of salvation. Every time you pray for someone's conversion; every time you evangelize by word or by example; every time you pray for perfect strangers who will die this day to accept Christ during their final earthly breath—in all these prayers and works of Christian intercession, you are cooperating in the Redemption of another human being. We are all co-redeemers with Christ. We are God's co-workers.

1 Corinthians 3:9: "For we are God's co-workers."

In the same way Mary is a co-redeemer but also in a special way because she said yes to God and gave birth to the Redeemer of mankind. By God's grace Mary can bring others to Christ and "save" them and be a co-redemptrix.

Next Topic: Did Mary have other children as Protestants believe and as scripture seems to indicate or was Mary Forever Virgin?