

How should we properly understand the death of Mary:

- **Refuting the Teaching of Mary's Assumption:** The Catholic Church teaches that because Mary lived a sinless life she was assumed or taken to heaven. There are examples in Scripture of this happening: Enoch (Gen. 5:24:), Elijah (2 Kings 2:11), Jesus (Acts 1:9), the Church (1 Thess. 4:17, 1 Cor. 15:52, John 14:3). But Jesus provided for Mary by giving John responsibility to care for her. None of John's writings mention Mary's life after her being with the apostles in Acts 1:14 and numbered with the first saints at Pentecost. Mary acknowledged her need of a Savior in Luke 1:47. John who wrote the final inspired Scriptures noted the command of Jesus for His apostles to pray to Him and ask whatever they need in His name, John 16:23-24.
- **What did Mary believe about Israel's Future? 5 Essential Truths to Understand About Israel:**
 1. **Israel is suffering justly under the Old Covenant:** Israel accepted the terms of the treaty given to Moses by Yahweh on Sinai and reconfirmed to the second generation after Israel's Exodus, Exodus 19:3, 8; 24:3, 7, & Deut. 5:27. Israel agreed to the blessings and curses of the Treaty (conditional covenant) in Deut. 28:1-14 (blessings), 15-68 (curses).
 2. **Israel will be regenerated under a New Covenant:** (1) God always had a remnant of believers who were faithful to Him. Yahweh promised to Israel in Ezekiel 36: to cleanse them (V24-25) and give them a new heart of flesh (V26). (2) God promised to send a Savior, Jer. 33:14-18. (3) God would send a Servant to save Israel, Is. 49:1-7. (4) God's Servant would die for their sins, Is. 53:4-6.
 3. **God's compassion towards Israel will never change:** By the prophet Hosea God outlines 10 chapters of Israel's treachery against Him. God's still promises that He wouldn't give up on Ephraim (Northern Tribes) and Israel (Judah and Southern Tribes). Hosea 11:8, God's compassions are stirred for Israel and remain for Israel.
 4. **God's promises to Israel will never change:** (1) In Hosea 12:2-3, God recounts His plan for Israel and how He birthed them from a heel grabbing son in the womb to Yahweh wrestling with Jacob. God reminds Israel to remember His name and return to Him, 12:5-6. (2) God's covenant is as sure as day and night and the sun and moon, if the laws that hold the sun, moon, and stars in place can ever be removed, then God's covenant with Israel could be, Jer. 31:35-37, 33:20-22.
 5. **God's salvation of Israel will be eternal:** God's future for Israel is not based upon the Old Covenant but an older covenant with Abraham given in Gen. 12:1-3; 13:14-18; 15:18-21; 17:1-8; 18:16-18; & 22:17-18. Because the covenant with Abraham is unconditional or granted, it can't be annulled by the beneficiary's disobedience, God has sworn to keep it and sent His Son Jesus to bring it to pass.
- **Mary believed it and sung that Yahweh has sent His Son in remembrance of Israel and for the salvation of God's people. A light to Israel and the nations, Is. 49.**
 1. **Mary believed that God would send a helper to a troubled Israel:** Ps. 115:9, Is. 41:14. Israel was suffering because they had turned away from God and disobeyed Him.
 2. **Mary believed Israel would be regenerated under a New Covenant:** they would look upon Him whom they have pierced. This is regeneration, Zech. 12:10-14.
 3. **Mary believed that God's compassion for Israel would never change:** Ps. 102:13, Is. 60:10. Luke 1:54, "in remembrance of His mercy."
 4. **Mary believed that God's promises will never change:** V55, "As He spoke to our fathers," The Scriptures bear witness of God's promises to His people.
 5. **Mary believed that God's salvation of Israel would be forever:** V55, "To Abraham and his seed forever." The promise to Abraham is to Isaac and Jacob and to all the nations of the earth.

Further Discussion and Application

The promises to Abraham extend to the church as well as Israel. God rescued us while we were dead in our trespasses and sins, Eph. 2:4-5. How do we know it was always God's plan to save Israel and the nations? What promises did God give to establish this promise?

The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit guaranteed salvation to those who would believe in Jesus through the words of the apostles, John 17:20. How has this promise been kept as the gospel has spread throughout the entire world going on 2,000 years? How is the light of Christ revealed in the lives of those who believe in Him? What does the church see clearly that Israel is still blinded from seeing?

Read Isaiah 49:1-7. How does this proclamation from God begin? Who is God speaking to? How did God ensure that His Son would be remembered? Even if the world rejects Christ, what does the person and work of Christ reveal to the world? What is glorious and beautiful about the work of the Servant of God? What is too small a thing for God to do through His Servant? Why is God's promise to restore Israel and bring salvation to the nations a small thing for God? When we consider the suffering Servant of Isaiah 53, why is the sacrifice of God's Son effectual to blot out the sins of those who would believe in Him?

If we put ourselves in the context of Isaiah's time of prophesying around 740 - 680 BC why are the promises of a coming Savior, of remission of sins, and a restored Israel of paramount importance? As we progress to Jeremiah and the time of Babylon about 100 years later, why are the promises of Jeremiah 31:35-38 so important? What do they reveal about God's mercy and compassion for Israel? What do the promises reveal about all of God's promises?