

Summary of Mary in the four Gospels

Mary in the Gospels

- The New Testament reveals very little about Mary
- Little is known about her life in general
- In comparison to the way in which she is portrayed in Roman Catholicism one would assume she is mentioned more than 19 times in the Bible in comparison to 34 in the Qur'an.

1. Gospel of Mark

Mentions: twice.

First time – Jesus dismisses Mary and his family in a seemingly negative tone as she searched for him while he is preaching.

Second time – 'son of Mary' in reference to Jesus.

Focus: Understanding Jesus and his discipleship. Suffering.

Background: theological thinking on Mary had not begun at the time as the gospel was written during the early days of the church.

2. Gospel of Matthew

Mentions: reveals most of what we know about Mary, alongside Luke.

First time – introduces the tradition of the Virgin Birth and shows Joseph accepting her as a wife. This is the popular portrayal of Mary the Mother of Jesus.

Second Time – shortly after she gives birth. The wise men approach her with gifts. She is shown to be the woman that gave birth to the Messiah and the manifestation of God on earth.

Focus: to introduce Jesus as the saviour of all people, even the unbelievers. Teaching.

Background: written for a community of mainly Jews that were in transition.

3. Gospel of Luke

Mentions: first to mention Mary as a true disciple

First Time - The first chapter of the Gospel of Luke is the **Annunciation**. Mary is introduced as a young girl that is engaged to be married. The Angel Gabriel appears to her and declares '**do not be afraid**', the angel states she will '**bear a son and you will name him Jesus**' without having to have sexual intercourse '**The Holy Spirit will come upon you**'. This shows the beginning of Mary's discipleship as she accepts the word of God.

Second Time - Immediately after the Annunciation is **the visitation** when Mary visits her pregnant cousin Elizabeth who immediately realises that Mary is pregnant. She testifies that Mary is a true disciple of God and blesses the strength of Mary's faith. Mary bursts into a soliloquy called '**the Magnificat**' that highlights her discipleship as she shows utter faith in God.

Third Time - The birth of Jesus. Mary is moved by the shepherds and angels. Fourth Time - Then eight days later the baby Jesus is circumcised in the temple. An old man called Simeon

approaches them as he recognises the Messiah. The visitation, birth and temple all confirm that Mary was indeed the Mother of Jesus.

Fourth Time - The next mention is when Jesus goes missing at the age of twelve. Mary and Joseph discover him in the Temple in Jerusalem listening to and questioning the temple elders. Mary is portrayed here as a caring mother and also one that is fully accepting of God's will as she accepts the decisions made by a young Jesus without understanding them. This highlights she is a true disciple as she accepts God's will.

Focus: Caring.

Background: Written for the new Christians of Corinth.

4. Gospel of John

Mentions: a different perspective is offered on Mary. The other gospels do not give her such importance within Jesus' life and public ministry.

First mention – The Wedding Feast at Cana. It is a crucial moment in Jesus' life as it marks his first miracle. Mary draws attention to the needs of her host who had run out of wine and displayed total trust in her son to sort out the problem and had total faith in the will of God. The purpose is to reveal the Glory of Jesus so his disciples would believe in him.

Second mention – Mary was a first-hand witness to the death of her son as she was at the foot of the cross. He felt utterly abandoned by his friends but saw his mother suffering. She knew she had to let go and accept the will of God. Mary gave her account to the apostles and in turn has the right to be considered an apostle.

Focus: spiritual

Background: for people who were already Christians, role to reinforce the message of Christ and help them understand it better.