



## SAVED TO SERVE

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### IS THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION BIBLICAL OR NOT?

1. In this Sabbath School Lesson, we will study the Roman Catholic doctrine of The Immaculate Conception. This study will address some of the major arguments used to support this claim by Catholics. Read below the paragraphs from a Catholic Website explaining this theory.

#### What is the Immaculate Conception?

"The Immaculate Conception is a Catholic dogma that states that Mary, whose conception was brought about the normal way, **was conceived without original sin or its stain**. That's what "immaculate" means: without stain."

"**The essence of original sin consists in the deprivation of sanctifying grace, and its stain is a corrupt nature. Mary was preserved from these defects by God's grace; from the first instant of her existence she was in the state of sanctifying grace and was free from the corrupt nature original sin brings.**"

<https://www.catholic.com/tract/immaculate-conception-and-assumption>

2. According to Catholics, what nature is Mary free from? From what point in her existence did she supposedly have this nature?

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3. What does the Bible tell us all have done? Romans 3:23

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4. How many are righteous? Romans 3:9-12; Isaiah 64:6

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- a) Who is the only exception to the statement that "all have sinned"? 1 Peter 2:21-23; Mark 10:18

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5. **Note:** The Bible teaches that after the fall of Adam into sin, all men are born with a corrupt or sinful nature (Psalm 51:5). This means that hereditarily passed down to us is a natural attraction to sin and **without being converted to Jesus, it would be impossible for us to overcome it.**

However, the doctrine of original sin taught by the Catholics teaches that while men are born with a corrupt or sinful nature, the guilt of Adam's sin is transferred to us and we are born guilty of sin before God. This very important difference between the inclination to sin and the guilt of sin has resulted in other doctrinal errors such as infant baptism! Nevertheless, the Bible is clear that sin is a choice and requires the ability to reason (Psalm 51:2-4; 1 John 3:4; Romans 7:5, 18-20). So, while we are born with a sinful disposition to sin, we are NOT born already guilty of sin (James 4:17).

6. Based on the above points, Mary the mother of Jesus, was a sinner just like you and me. She was not innately holy and sinless. Catholics use Luke 1:28-33 to teach the immaculate conception. What did the angel tell Mary in Luke 1:28?

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7. What made her "highly favored" and "blessed" among women? Luke 1:26-27

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- a) What message did the angel deliver to Mary which is why she was "blessed among women" and "highly favored"? Luke 1:30-32

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8. **Note:** In the birth of Jesus was fulfilled the promise since the fall of Adam and Eve that a seed would be born to crush Satan's head and deliver His people from sin (Genesis 3:15). Jesus was that promised seed, who died to save fallen humanity (Acts 13:21-23; Romans 1:3; 2 Timothy 2:8). Mary was highly favored and blessed by bearing the Son of God, and being a virgin living in Nazareth, a place lowly esteemed by the people of that day (John 1:46).

**"The Saviour's coming was foretold in Eden. When Adam and Eve first heard the promise, they looked for its speedy fulfillment. They joyfully welcomed their first-born son, hoping that he might be the Deliverer. But the fulfillment of the promise tarried. Those who first received it died without the sight. From the days of Enoch the promise was repeated through patriarchs and prophets, keeping alive the hope of His appearing,** and yet He came not. The prophecy of Daniel revealed the time of His advent, but not all rightly interpreted the message. Century after century passed away; the voices of the prophets ceased. The hand of the oppressor was heavy upon Israel, and many were ready to exclaim, "The days are prolonged, and every vision faileth." Ezekiel 12:22. {DA 31.2}

9. What did Mary herself say which confirms she was a sinner who needed forgiveness and a Savior? Luke 1:46-47
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10. If Mary was conceived without a sinful nature and was therefore free from sin, then it would imply that her mother, grandmother, great grandmother, etc were also sinless beings. From this erroneous doctrine of The Immaculate Conception is derived the belief that Jesus was born with a sinless nature such as Adam had before his fall. According to the Bible, in what kind of flesh did God send His Son, Jesus, into the world? Romans 8:3
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11. What is Jesus not ashamed to call us? Hebrews 2:11
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12. Why can Jesus call us brethren? Hebrews 2:16-17
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13. Isaiah 53 also confirms that Jesus DID NOT come with the nature of angels or a sinless nature. Adam's nature before the fall was untainted by sin and so was his body and physical form. In contrast to Adam's sinless character and body without deformity, how is Jesus described in Isaiah 53:2?
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14. Furthermore, what kind of form does Philippians 2:6-7 tell us Jesus took on when He came to earth?
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- a) Although Jesus came to earth as a human, having our sinful nature and being predisposed to sin, He was still God. Human minds cannot comprehend this, and therefore, it is called the "mystery of godliness" (1 Timothy 3:16). Read John 1:1, 14. Based on this study so far, when Jesus, the Word, became flesh, what kind of flesh did He have?
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15. What did the apostle John call people who deny that Jesus Christ came in the flesh? 2 John 1:7; 1 John 4:3
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16. **Note:** The church system of Roman Catholicism does not teach and believe that Jesus Christ came in the likeness of sinful flesh. They say, since Mary was untouched by "original sin" and essentially had a holy, divine nature, Jesus also was born with that same sinless, perfect nature. The leaders who knowingly teach this heresy are deceivers, and the entire system, with the Pope at its head, is the Antichrist.

17. Roman Catholics also teach that Mary was "assumed or taken up" into heaven. See an excerpt from their website below.

### **What is Assumption?**

**"The Assumption is the doctrine that says that at the end of her life on earth Mary was assumed, body and soul, into heaven, just as Enoch, Elijah, and perhaps others had been before her.** Some people think Catholics believe Mary "ascended" into heaven. That's not correct. Christ, by his own power, ascended into heaven. Mary was assumed or taken up into heaven by God. She didn't do it under her own power."

“The Church has never formally defined whether she died or not, and the integrity of the doctrine of the Assumption would not be impaired if she did not in fact die, but the almost universal consensus is that she did die....”

"**The possibility** of a bodily assumption before the Second Coming **is suggested** by Matthew 27:52–53: “[T]he tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many....”

<https://www.catholic.com/tract/immaculate-conception-and-assumption>

18. Was Mary alive or dead at the time of Jesus’ resurrection when individuals who were asleep in the grave rose with Him (Matthew 27:52-53)? John 19:25-27 **Answer:** Mary was alive at this time because while Jesus was on the cross, He told her “woman, behold thy son” - referring to the apostle John. Therefore, Matthew 27:52-53 cannot be a scripture used to teach a doctrine based on **speculation** that Mary was taken up to heaven.

19. In addition to believing that Mary is alive in heaven, Catholics teach that we can pray to her so she can be our intercessor between us and Jesus. Who does the Bible say is our only intercessor and mediator? Hebrews 7:22, 25; Romans 8:34; 1 Timothy 2:5

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20. **Note:** Still people use the marriage feast miracle in John 2 to suggest that Mary is our intercessor to Jesus. Why did Mary petition Jesus to perform a miracle?

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“As the guests assemble, many seem to be preoccupied with some topic of absorbing interest. A suppressed excitement pervades the company. Little groups converse together in eager but quiet tones, and wondering glances are turned upon the Son of Mary. **As Mary had heard the disciples’ testimony in regard to Jesus, she had been gladdened with the assurance that her long-cherished hopes were not in vain. Yet she would have been more than human if there had not mingled with this holy joy a trace of the fond mother’s natural pride. As she saw the many glances bent upon Jesus, she longed to have Him prove to the company that He was really the Honored of God. She hoped there might be opportunity for Him to work a miracle before them.** {DA 145.3}

“In saying to Mary that His hour had not yet come, Jesus was replying to her unspoken thought,—to the expectation she cherished in common with her people. **She hoped that He would reveal Himself as the Messiah, and take the throne of Israel. But the time had not come.** Not as a King, but as “a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief,” had Jesus accepted the lot of humanity. {DA 147.3}

**“But though Mary had not a right conception of Christ’s mission, she trusted Him implicitly. To this faith Jesus responded. It was to honor Mary’s trust, and to strengthen the faith of His disciples, that the first miracle was performed....”** {DA 147.4}

21. Does Mary have any special merit or is above the human race in any way? See quotation below.

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**“The only hope of redemption for our fallen race is in Christ; Mary could find salvation only through the Lamb of God. In herself she possessed no merit. Her connection with Jesus placed her in no different spiritual relation to Him from that of any other human soul. This is indicated in the Saviour’s words. He makes clear the distinction between His relation to her as the Son of man and as the Son of God. The tie of kinship between them in no way placed her on an equality with Him.** {DA 147.1}

22. As we close, let us focus on how Jesus’ coming to earth in the likeness of sinful flesh impacts our salvation. What did Jesus do to sin when He came in the likeness of sinful flesh? Romans 8:3

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a) Through Jesus’ sinless life, as we surrender to Him, what can be fulfilled in us? Romans 8:4

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23. Since Jesus lived a life above sin and can sympathize with our temptations, what can we boldly do? Hebrews 4:15-16

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24. When we receive God's grace and mercy, what will He keep us from doing? How will He present us to Himself? Jude 24

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25. What promise can we claim as we trust in Jesus' power and righteousness to overcome sin? Philipians 4:13

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