
“MARY DID YOU KNOW?”

BY MARK LOWRY (B. 1958)

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Wikipedia – **Mark Alan Lowry (born June 24, 1958)** is an American singer, comedian, and songwriter. He is best known for co-writing the song "Mary, Did You Know?" and being a member of the Gaither Vocal Band from 1988 to 2001, and 2009 to 2013, along with Michael English, David Phelps and Bill Gaither. Lowry has recorded twelve albums, both music and comedy.... **In 1984, Lowry wrote the lyrics to the song "Mary, Did You Know?", when asked to write a script for a church Christmas play.** He wrote a series of questions that he would like to ask Mary, the mother of Jesus. These questions were used in between the scenes of the play. Over the next decade, Lowry tried to find music that would complete the song. Eventually, musician and songwriter Buddy Greene wrote the music to the song. The Christmas play script then became the song. The song has become a popular Christmas song performed by more than thirty artists including Cee Lo Green, Clay Aiken, Kenny Rogers, Wynonna Judd, Michael English, Daniel Childs, Natalie Cole, Pippa Wilson[6], Kathy Mattea, Michael Crawford, Zara Larsson, Peter Hollens, and Pentatonix. In 2016, Lowry himself sang it, backed by the a cappella group, Voctave.

Sung versions: Clay Aiken, *Merry Christmas with Love* (2004); Pentatonix, *That's Christmas to Me* (Deluxe Edition) (2015); Kenny Rogers, *The Gift* (1996), a duet with Wynonna¹; **Reba McEntire, *My Kind of Christmas* (2017), sung with Vince Gill and Amy Grant.**

¹ *Wikipedia* – “**Wynonna Ellen Judd (/waɪˈnoʊnə/; born Christina Claire Ciminella; May 30, 1964)** is a multi-award winning American country music singer. Her solo albums and singles are all credited to the single name Wynonna. She first rose to fame in the 1980s alongside her mother Naomi in the country music duo *The Judds*. They released seven albums on Curb Records in addition to 26 singles, of which 14 were number-one hits.”

CONSIDERATIONS

I think it is important to recognize that underlying these Questions as askable ones is a conviction that **if Mary had known, if she had *foreknowledge* about what Jesus could and would do in the world**, then that seems to explain why she acted as courageously and faithfully as she did. In other words, the author of this Carol thinks that *knowledge* has to come first, then our obedience to what is asked of us by God to do. Or, if we trust that this author has considerable spiritual understanding, then we conclude that **the whole point of the Questions is to prove that knowledge is not nearly as significant as we often guess it is**. What is far more important is trust in God Who gave to Mary this destiny.

When I interacted with this Carol in 2020, preparing for The Faber Sessions #4 in December, it occurred to me to ask myself three questions: (1) **Who** is it who is asking Mary these questions?; and (2) **When** was Mary being asked these Questions?; and (3) **What** did Mary reply to these Questions?

When was Mary being asked these Questions? What would she have replied if asked these having just delivered her son, Jesus? What would she have replied if asked these during the long, devastating silence of Holy Saturday? What would she have replied if asked these after Jesus was the Resurrected One? However, the use of **the future tense** in the verses seems to indicate that these Questions were being asked of her in the stable at Bethlehem.

Who is asking her these questions? (1) If she were asked these Questions in the stable at Bethlehem, then I wonder whether it was an Angel, perhaps the Archangel Gabriel (whom both Mary and Joseph met at their respective annunciations – hers in Luke’s account; his in Matthew’s account) who came to speak with her. In this instance, the Questions were encouragements to her in the mystery of that night of Jesus’ birth; a foretelling, and overture, of what would come to pass. (2) If she were asked these during Holy Saturday, perhaps it was Mary and Martha and Lazarus (who knew what it meant to die) who were asking her. In this instance, the Questions were reminders of the enormous grace and good of her son’s life and work. (3) If she were asked these Questions in the weeks after the Resurrection, then perhaps it was within a gathering of the disciples, and with Jesus present among them, that she was asked these. (4) If she is being asked these Questions by us, then perhaps are Questions are something about us wishing for ourselves something of the courage of Mary, *who lived into the answer to these Questions through the Mystery of her life with her son*.

What did Mary reply? Perhaps we grasp that the answer to all of the Questions “Did you know? Is “**No, I did not.**”

THE TEXT

Mary, did you know
That your baby boy will one day walk on water?

Mary, did you know
That your baby boy will save our sons and daughters?

Did you know
That your baby boy has come to make you new?

This child that you've delivered
Will soon deliver you

Mary, did you know
That your baby boy will give sight to a blind man?

Mary, did you know
That your baby boy will calm a storm with His hand?

Did you know
That your baby boy has walked where angels trod?

And when you kiss your little baby
You've kissed the face of God

Mary, did you know?
The blind will see
The deaf will hear
And the dead will live again
The lame will leap
The dumb will speak
The praises of the Lamb

Mary, did you know
That your baby boy is Lord of all creation?

Mary, did you know
That your baby boy will one day rule the nations?

Did you know
That your baby boy is heaven's perfect Lamb?

This sleeping child you're holding
Is the Great I Am

Oh Mary did you know?