

4. Mary Made a Visit to Elizabeth

In our last topic, we saw that Mary was told that she would give birth to the Son of God. We saw that Mary was willing to live with the gossip that would come since the people of Nazareth did not know that Mary had conceived that Son through the power of the Holy Spirit. We saw that we also want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to understand that the Lord will give them strength for every situation they face in life, including those who might make false accusations against them. In our topic today, we will learn about the visit of Mary to Elizabeth after the visit of the angel Gabriel.

Luke 1:39-45 says, “Now Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste, to a city of Judah, and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. Then she spoke out with a loud voice and said, ‘Blessed *are* you among women, and blessed *is* the fruit of your womb! But why is this *granted* to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. Blessed *is* she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord.’” Here, we see that Mary quickly made arrangements to go and visit Elizabeth.

To travel from Galilee to the hill country of Judea was a trip of between seventy-five and one hundred miles from Nazareth, depending on which city in the hill country was the home of Zacharias and Elizabeth. A very unusual thing happened when Mary greeted Elizabeth as she came into the house of Elizabeth. The baby immediately leaped in the womb of Elizabeth. Zacharias had been told in Luke 1:15 that the baby would be filled with the Holy Spirit from the time that he was conceived in the womb of his mother. We see that Elizabeth was also filled with the Holy Spirit. This caused her to speak with a loud voice as she gave praise to God for what God was doing in the life of Mary.

Elizabeth gave praise to God for both Mary and the child that would be born to her. She asked why she would have the privilege of having a visit by the mother of the one who would be the promised Messiah. The angel had told Zacharias in Luke 1:17 about the ministry of John, “‘He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, ‘to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,’ and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.’” As a result, Zacharias and Elizabeth knew that John would prepare the way for the coming of the Messiah. The last part of verse 41 says, “And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.” Here, we see that the Holy Spirit guided Elizabeth to recognize that the baby Mary would have would be the Messiah God had promised.

This is an example of the fact that the Holy Spirit gives us understanding when we seek to understand what the Lord is doing. John 14:26 says, “‘But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.’” Christ gave this promise to the disciples the night before He was crucified. Since Elizabeth and John were both filled with the Holy Spirit already, the Spirit gave

them that understanding at that time. Elizabeth then told Mary that the Holy Spirit had caused the baby to leap in her womb as soon as she heard the greeting of Mary. Elizabeth said that because Mary had believed the promise of God, she would see a fulfillment of all that God had promised.

Mary immediately gave praise to God for what the Lord had chosen to do in her life. Luke 1:46-50 says, “And Mary said: ‘My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant; for behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed. For He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy *is* His name. And His mercy *is* on those who fear Him from generation to generation.’” The word “magnifies” means *to give praise or to declare the greatness of*. Here, we see that Mary began by giving praise to the Lord and declaring His greatness. Even as a young woman, she recognized the greatness of God.

Our human spirit is where we have communion with the Holy Spirit. The spirit of Mary was filled with joy. Mary recognized that the baby that the Lord had conceived in her body was also her Savior. A few months later, an angel of the Lord told Joseph in a dream, in Matthew 1:21, “‘And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.’” Mary and Joseph both understood even before Jesus was born that He was also their Savior and He would save them from their sins. Just like us, they both needed a Savior to save them from their sin.

Mary also realized her own humanity when she said, “For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant.” The word translated “lowly state” is an attitude of humility that causes us to realize our littleness and guilt. Philippians 3:21 says, “Who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.” Here, we see that Christ will conform our lowly body to His glorious body. The word translated “maidservant” was the word for a female bonds slave. Mary knew that she was just a bonds slave of the Lord as she carried out the plan that He had for her life. She realized that future generations would consider her blessed because God had chosen to work through her life.

Mary went on to give praise and glory to God for who He is. She gave praise for the fact that God is the One who is Mighty. She realized that the Lord had chosen to do wonderful things in her life by giving her the opportunity to give birth to the One who would be her Savior. She realized that God is the only One who is holy because that is His character. Mary also recognized that she needed the mercy of God just like every person from all generations that have had a godly fear in their lives. The word translated “mercy” means *the kindness of God by which He forgives all of our sins through Christ and does not give us the eternal judgment that we deserve*.

Mary continued to describe the character and works of God as she gave praise to God. Luke 1:51-56 says, “‘He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered *the* proud in the imagination of their hearts. He has put down the mighty from *their* thrones, and exalted *the* lowly. He has filled *the* hungry with good things, and *the* rich He has sent away empty. He has helped His servant Israel, in remembrance of *His* mercy, as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed forever.’ And Mary remained with her about three months, and returned to her house.” Mary

gave a real example of true worship as she described the character and work of God.

The word translated “strength” speaks of the mighty power of God. The word is used several times as a part of a prayer to describe the power of God. Paul used this word in Ephesians 1:19-20 where we read, “And what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated *Him* at His right hand in the heavenly *places*.” Mary certainly recognized the mighty power of God as she spoke of the way that God works through His power.

She recognized that God has used His power to scatter the proud in the imagination of their hearts. Daniel 4:30-31, 33 says, “The king spoke, saying, ‘Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?’ While the word *was still* in the king's mouth, a voice fell from heaven: ‘King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: the kingdom has departed from you!’ ...That very hour the word was fulfilled concerning Nebuchadnezzar; he was driven from men and ate grass like oxen; his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair had grown like eagles' *feathers* and his nails like birds' *claws*.” This is certainly an example of what Mary said about scattering the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

It is also an example of the way that God puts down the mighty from their thrones. As Mary talked about the way that God judges the mighty in their pride, she also spoke of the fact that God exalts the lowly. The word translated “lowly” means *humble or lowly in spirit*. James 4:6-7 says, “But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: ‘God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.’ Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.” Mary also spoke of the fact that God fills to the fullest with good things those who are hungry. The word translated “good things” speaks of that which is good in its character and beneficial in its effects. At the same time, He sends the rich away empty-handed because they lack spiritual life.

Mary also spoke of the fact that God had remembered the nation of Israel. In the Old Testament, God had warned Israel many times that judgment would come if they turned away from Him. At the same time, He promised that He would continue to show His mercy to Abraham and his descendants forever. God had promised Israel in Deuteronomy 30:3, “‘That the Lord your God will bring you back from captivity, and have compassion on you, and gather you again from all the nations where the Lord your God has scattered you.’” Mary realized that God was going to bring that future blessing to the nation of Israel through the Son that would be born to her.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children fully understand that Mary realized that her own son would also be her Savior. This will make it possible for them to help others by explaining this clearly. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain why Mary understood that her son was also her Savior.