

Why Was Mary Blessed Among Women?

Sunday, 12/23 – 10:00

Fourth Sunday in Advent – 2018

Christmas Eve at 6 | Christmas Day at 10 | Sunday, 12/30 at 10

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: It's almost Christmas and we are in Luke chapter 1; *these key events have recently taken place:*

- ➔ The angel Gabriel was sent to Zechariah to inform him that he and his wife, Elizabeth – *though both were advanced in years* – would have a most special son, *who would prepare the way for the coming Messiah!*
- ➔ Then, *when Elizabeth was six months pregnant*, the angel Gabriel was sent to Mary, *the one **having been highly favored** by God (1:28)*. And what did that mean that God highly favored her? It meant that God showed great kindness to Mary; *He was kind to her because of who He is*, and not because of anything in her! Also, Gabriel told Mary that – *though she was a virgin* – she would conceive and bear a son, who would
◆ be *great*, ◆ be *called the Son of the Most High*, and ◆ *reign forever* (1:32-33).

1. **The Setting:** ³⁹ *In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah [having traveled over 100 miles from Nazareth],* ⁴⁰ *and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth.*



- a. In what days? Those were the days shortly after Mary had conceived the Son of God. Let's not forget these unusual circumstances:
- i. Mary was pregnant – *though not yet married!*
 - ii. Mary was pregnant – *though still a virgin!*
 - iii. Mary knew that Elizabeth was pregnant – *since Gabriel had said to her, “your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month” (Lk. 1:36 ESV).*
 - iv. Mary wanted to get out of Nazareth – *since others assumed she had sinned!*
 - v. Mary wanted to see Elizabeth – *who was pregnant!*
- b. Who were Zechariah and Elizabeth? They were both descendants of the tribe of Levi – Zechariah being a priest and Elizabeth being “*from the daughters of Aaron*” (1:5). As you know, *the 12 tribes of Israel became the nation of Israel*; Mary was of the tribe of Judah, and Elizabeth was of the tribe of Levi, *so they were related*; we could even say they were cousins, *but maybe distant cousins*, rather than first cousins.
2. **John and His Mother:** ⁴¹ **And [it happened] when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit,** // Mary spoke, John leaped, and Elizabeth was filled; what can be said about such things? Prior to John being conceived, Gabriel said to Zechariah, “*he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb*” (Lk. 1:15 ESV). Therefore, John leaped; also, God granted Elizabeth a special filling, *like that of an OT prophet*, so she could speak important things about Mary and her baby!

3. **Elizabeth Shouted About Mary and Her Baby:** ⁴² and she exclaimed with a loud cry, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!
- Mary: She was blessed, not because she was sinless (Rom. 3:23), *but because God chose her above all women to bring His Son into the world!*
 - Her Baby: He was blessed because of who He is – *God with us*, and what He would do – *take away the sin of the world!*
 - A note on the addition and deception: Many Roman Catholics are familiar with this statement and prayer offered to Mary: “Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women; and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death.” Two major problems: (1) By adding the prayer to the Bible verse, *it gives the impression that the prayer is in the Bible*; (2) the Bible makes it clear that Jesus is the only mediator between God and man (1 Tim. 2:5); *so Mary cannot hear nor answer such a prayer.*
4. **The Mary – Elizabeth Connection:** ⁴³ And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴ For behold, when the sound of your greeting came into my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for great joy [*gladness, exaltation*]. // Since the Holy Spirit had made it known to Elizabeth that Mary was pregnant with the Promised Savior, *Elizabeth acknowledged Mary’s importance as well as the reaction made by John!*
5. **Mary Was a Faithful Old Testament Believer:** ⁴⁵ And blessed is ~~she who believed~~ [the one believing] that

there would be a fulfillment of ~~what was~~ [the things having been] spoken to her from the Lord.”

- a. The Lord spoke through the angel to Mary: *Angels are messengers*, so the message went ▶from God, ▶to Gabriel, ▶to Mary; that happened in Nazareth, *before Mary visited Elizabeth*.
- b. The Lord spoke through Elizabeth to Mary: As the prophets and apostles were moved by the Holy Spirit to speak and write the very words of God, *so here the Holy Spirit moved Elizabeth to speak His words to Mary!* And now, think about Mary: She heard words from Elizabeth that Elizabeth could not have possibly known – *apart from God speaking through her*. Therefore, Mary must have been ▶uplifted, ▶encouraged, and ▶amazed at such things!
- c. Mary believed what seemed impossible: Mary received the words of Elizabeth as the very words of God, so, *knowing their source*, she believed!
- d. We are called to believe what seems impossible: When I read the Bible, *I never wonder whether it is true or not*; instead, I always know it is true – *because the Bible IS God’s Word to us*, which is fully reliable; therefore, *let us always believe it and rejoice in Jesus!*

Let Us Pray: Father in heaven, You chose Mary to be the woman through whom You would send Your Son into the world; as You used Mary – *a faithful OT believer* – in an extraordinary way, so make us open to be used by You – *according to Your plan for our lives!*

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