

## Introduction

One evening I was sitting in my recliner chair in our living room, which was near the entry door of the house. My wife had gone out to a ladies' small group, and I had taken care of the children and put them to bed. When she came in the door, she said hello, and bent over and gave me a kiss. Whenever one of us would leave, we would kiss the other one good-bye, and when we returned, we would greet one another with a kiss. This was our normal farewell and greeting practice. Though Karen's greeting with a kiss was normal, that night was not normal. As soon as she kissed me, I was filled with the Holy Spirit. Her kiss sent a wave of spiritual electricity through my entire body, and I just sat there in awe and amazement of what just happened to me. When I was filled with the Holy Spirit, I felt like God had filled my entire body with His love.

In our text today, Mary has gone down from Nazareth to Elizabeth, who was living in the hill country, to a city in Judah. When she entered the house of Elizabeth and greeted her, Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. Greetings in both the Old and New Testament typically included a holy kiss. In the same way that I was filled with the Holy Spirit when Karen greeted me, Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit when Mary greeted her.

Our passage today is Mary's visit with Elizabeth. We will look at her arrival and greeting. Second, we will look at Elizabeth's filling of the Holy Spirit and her prophetic blessing. Third, we will look at Mary's prophetic response. Fourth, we will look at Mary's return home.

## Mary's Visit with Elizabeth (Lk 1:36-56)

1. Mary's arrival and greeting
2. Elizabeth's filling and prophetic blessing
3. Mary's prophetic response
4. Mary's return home

### 1. Mary's arrival and greeting (Lk 1:36-40)

Mary lives in Galilee in the city of Nazareth, which is in Galilee. Many scholars believe that she is somewhere between twelve and sixteen years of age, which is the age that many young women were married. She is a virgin, and is engaged to a man, whose name is Joseph, who is a descendant of David. She was visited by the angel, Gabriel, who stands before the presence of God.

(Lk 1:26-27) "Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth, {27} to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin's name was Mary."

Gabriel told Mary that she was going to conceive and bear a son, and call Him Jesus. Mary asked Gabriel how this could be since when was a virgin, and he responded, saying, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God."

(Lk 1:31-35) And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus... {34} Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" {35} The angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God."

Then, Gabriel told her that her relative, Elizabeth, had also conceived a son in her old age, and is in her sixth month of pregnancy. This was going to be a miraculous pregnancy. Gabriel concluded, saying, "For nothing will be impossible with God."

(Lk 1:36-37) "And behold, even your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age; and she who was called barren is now in her sixth month. {37} For nothing will be impossible with God."

Mary responded in two ways. First, she responded to Gabriel and said, "Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word." After she said that, Gabriel departed from her.

(Lk 1:38) "And Mary said, "Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

Mary's second response was to get up and go in a hurry to the hill country, to a city of Judah, and visit Elizabeth. Although Luke does not say anything about her parents or family. When Luke gives the genealogy of Jesus, he gives Mary's genealogy, which traces back to David, which gives Jesus the biological claim of being a son of David. In Matthew, Jesus' genealogy goes through Joseph, which gave Jesus the legal claim of being a son of David. But nothing is said here of her parents or family. She is a young lady, and she lives about eighty-five to ninety-five miles north of Elizabeth. That means it will take her four to seven days to make the trip. It is not only a long trip, but a dangerous trip to go on, particularly by yourself, and even more so if you are just a young teenage girl. If I was her father, I would not allow her to make the trip by herself. Therefore, I believe that Mary did not go alone, but probably was accompanied by her family, or some members of her family.

(Lk 1:39-40) "Now at this time Mary arose and went in a hurry to the hill country, to a city of Judah, {40} and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth."

Mary went in a hurry to the hill country, to a city of Judah. Luke does not tell us what city in Judah she went to, and there are two thoughts of where Elizabeth and Zachariah were living. One view is that Elizabeth and Zacharias lived in Hebron, which was a priestly city. In Joshua 21:13, the sons of Aaron were given Hebron, the city of refuge for the manslayer, with its pasture lands. In verse eleven, Hebron is described as being in the hill country of Judah. Hebron is twenty miles south of Jerusalem. This is the traditional Jewish identification, and it fits the description of "hill country."

(Jos 21:11-13) "Thus they gave them Kiriath-arba, *Arba being* the father of Anak (that is, Hebron), in the hill country of Judah, with its surrounding pasture lands. {12} But the fields of the city and its villages they gave to Caleb the son of Jephunneh as his possession. {13} So to the sons of Aaron the priest they gave Hebron, the city of refuge for the manslayer, with its pasture lands, and Libnah with its pasture lands,"

The other view is that Elizabeth and Zacharias lived in Ein Karem, which is a few miles southwest of Jerusalem. It is also in the hill country of Judah and fits the description. Ein Karem was regarded by early church tradition as John the Baptist's birthplace.

Mary obviously knew where Elizabeth lived, and went in a hurry to her house. When she entered the house of Zacharias, she greeted Elizabeth. The typical greeting in those days was to bow

down, say, “Shalom”, and give a holy kiss. For example, in Exodus 18:7, Jethro came to visit Moses, and he brought Moses’ wife and two sons to him. When Moses saw them, he went out to meet his father-in-law and bowed down and kissed him. That was the cultural practice.

(Ex 18:5–7) “Then Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, came with his sons and his wife to Moses in the wilderness where he was camped, at the mount of God. {6} He sent word to Moses, “I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to you with your wife and her two sons with her.” {7} Then Moses went out to meet his father-in-law, and he bowed down and kissed him; and they asked each other of their welfare and went into the tent.”

It was no different in the New Testament. Paul wrote about greeting one another with a kiss in many of his letters. and commanded the believers to greet one another with a holy kiss. In Romans 16:16, he told the church to greet one another with a holy kiss. He wrote the same thing in 1 Corinthians 16:20, 2 Corinthians 13:12, and 1 Thessalonians 5:26. Peter also ended his first letter with an exhortation for them to greet one another with a kiss of love. This was a normal, cultural practice at that time.

(Ro 16:16) “Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you.”

(1 Co 16:20) “All the brethren greet you. Greet one another with a holy kiss.”

(2 Co 13:12) “Greet one another with a holy kiss.”

(1 Th 5:26) “Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss.”

(1 Pe 5:14) “Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace be to you all who are in Christ.”

Luke does not tell us how Mary greeted Elizabeth, only that she greeted her. It is safe to assume when Mary entered Elizabeth’s house, she bowed down, kissed her, and greeted her, saying, “Shalom.”

(Lk 1:40) “and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth.”

## **2. Elizabeth’s filling and prophetic blessing (Lk 1:41-45)**

When Mary greeted Elizabeth, baby John leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. I believe that the Holy Spirit had already come upon Mary, and she had already been overshadowed with the Holy Spirit. In the same way that Karen was full of the Holy Spirit, and I was filled with the Holy Spirit by her greeting, Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit when Mary greeted her.

(Lk 1:41-45) “When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.”

The first thing that happened when Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit is the baby in her womb leaped. She is six months pregnant so movement by a baby inside the womb is normal. But this was not just a kick by little Johnnie; this was a leap. John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Spirit and he leaped inside of her womb. The Greek word that was used is skirtao (Strong’s G4640), which means to skip, jump, or leap for joy. Skirtao was used by the Greeks to refer to the galloping of young horses. The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament says that it

denotes joy, or joyful movement. The same word is used in Luke 6:23 where Jesus was teaching His disciples and told them, "Be glad in that day and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven." John leaped for joy in her womb.

(Lk 6:23) "Be glad in that day and leap *for joy*, for behold, your reward is great in heaven. For in the same way their fathers used to treat the prophets."

There are many today that say that a baby in the womb is not a baby, but a fetus. Fetus is a Latin word, and it means the young while in the womb, or the bearing or hatching of young. A fetus is a baby in the womb. Notice a few things about John at six months old in the womb. First, John can hear Mary's greeting. Second, John can understand and discern voices. Third, John had emotions; he leaped with joy inside the womb. Fourth, John had a body, soul, and spirit. He could think with his mind, which is part of the soul. He was filled with the Holy Spirit. He also could leap with his body. John was an unborn child, full of joy about the coming of the Messiah.

Both Elizabeth and John were filled with the Holy Spirits, which is what Gabriel had told Zacharias in Luke 1:15. He had said, "For he will be great in the sight of the Lord; and he will drink no wine or liquor, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit while yet in his mother's womb." This prophecy was fulfilled when Mary gave her greeting to Elizabeth.

(Lk 1:15) "For he will be great in the sight of the Lord; and he will drink no wine or liquor, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit while yet in his mother's womb."

In Psalm 139, David wrote about babies in the womb. In verse thirteen he said that God had formed his inward parts, and woven him together in his mother's womb. This was not just true of David, it is true of every baby; God forms babies while in their mother's womb. David went on to say that he was fearfully and wonderfully made, and that he was skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth. He said that God sees our unformed substance. God is the one that fashions babies in the womb. He even knows the days ordained for us when there is not yet one. He knows our beginning and our end.

(Ps 139:13–16) "For You formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother's womb. {14} I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, and my soul knows it very well. {15} My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth; {16} Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; and in Your book were all written the days that were ordained for me, when as yet there was not one of them."

God has plans for every one of us. He told Jeremiah that before He formed him in his mother's womb, He knew him. He consecrated him and appointed him to be a prophet to the nations before he was born. God knows the gifts and calling in each of us.

(Je 1:5) "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations."

The apostle Paul wrote that God had set him apart even from his mother's womb. Paul did not know God yet, but God had a plan for his life. He has a plan for each and every one of us.

(Ga 1:15) "But when God, who had set me apart *even* from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, was pleased"

God was fashioning John in Elizabeth's womb, and He knew that John would be a Nazarite and drink no wine or liquor. He knew that John was the forerunner of Christ, in the spirit and power of Elijah. God knew that He had called John to turn many of the sons of Israel back to the Lord. God had a plan for John's life. God has a plan for every baby in the womb.

(Lk 1:15–17) “For he will be great in the sight of the Lord; and he will drink no wine or liquor, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit while yet in his mother's womb. {16} And he will turn many of the sons of Israel back to the Lord their God. {17} It is he who will go *as a forerunner* before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers back to the children, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”

When Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, she began to prophesy with a loud voice. The Greek word for loud is *megas*, which is where we get our word, megaphone. Elizabeth cried out with a loud voice and began prophesying. It is very normal for people to begin to prophesy when they get filled with the Holy Spirit. When John was born, Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied.

(Lk 1:42) “And she cried out with a loud voice...”

(Lk 1:67) “And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying:”

In Acts 19, Paul found some disciples in Ephesus who had not received the Holy Spirit. He laid hands on them and the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking with tongues and prophesying.

(Ac 19:6) “And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they *began* speaking with tongues and prophesying.”

In Acts 2, after the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the disciples at Pentecost, Peter explained to the crowd that had gathered that these men were not drunk, but that the Holy Spirit had been poured out on them, just as Joel had prophesied.

(Ac 2:14–18) “But Peter, taking his stand with the eleven, raised his voice and declared to them: “Men of Judea and all you who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you and give heed to my words. {15} For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only the third hour of the day; {16} but this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel: {17} ‘And it shall be in the last days,’ God says, ‘That I will pour forth of My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, And your young men shall see visions, And your old men shall dream dreams; {18} Even on My bondslaves, both men and women, I will in those days pour forth of My Spirit And they shall prophesy.’”

Joel prophesied that when the Holy Spirit was poured out, they would prophesy, dream dreams, and see visions. When people get filled with the Holy Spirit, it is very normal and common to prophesy.

(Joe 2:28–29) “It will come about after this that I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; and your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. {29} “Even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.”

One Sunday in 1992, we were worshiping in a church service, and we were standing in the balcony section of the auditorium, and the Holy Spirit came upon me, and I received a prophetic word from the Lord. I did not prophesy out loud and disrupt the service; I simply pulled my notebook out and wrote as fast as I could the things the Holy Spirit was telling me. The Lord said that He was sending me out, and He was going to put me back on the PGA Tour. That fall, I clung to those words that the Lord gave, and the Lord did put me back on the PGA Tour. It is common to prophesy when you get filled with the Holy Spirit.

The book of Revelations is a book of prophecies that the Lord gave to John while on the Island of Patmos. He said that he was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, which is Sunday, and the Lord began showing him what was going to happen in the last days. The Lord told him to write in a book what you see. It is common to receive prophecies when you are filled with the Holy Spirit.

(Re 1:10–11) "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like *the sound* of a trumpet, {11} saying, "Write in a book what you see, and send *it* to the seven churches..."

When Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, she prophesied three blessings on Mary. The first blessing was that she was blessed among women. Earlier, Gabriel had greeted Mary, saying, Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." Mary was blessed and favored. Of all the women in the world, Mary was the one that God chose to use to bring forth His Son. Mary was blessed among women.

(Lk 1:42) "And she cried out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed *are* you among women, and blessed *is* the fruit of your womb!"

(Lk 1:28) "And coming in, he said to her, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord *is* with you."

The second blessing that Elizabeth prophesied was over Jesus. She prophesied, "Blessed is the fruit of your womb!" Jesus was the fruit of her womb, and Jesus received a blessing from Elizabeth. At this time, Elizabeth had no idea that Gabriel had told Mary that she would bear a Son. She had no way of knowing that Mary was pregnant. Mary is a young, teenage girl, a virgin, and engaged to a man named Joseph. Yet in the Spirit, she prophesied that the fruit of her womb would be blessed.

The third blessing that Elizabeth gave to Mary was that she was blessed for believing that there would be a fulfillment of what had been spoken to her by the Lord. Again, Elizabeth at this point, has no idea that Gabriel visited Mary and that Mary was pregnant with the Son of God. Elizabeth prophesied, "And how has it happened to me, that the mother of my Lord would come to me? For behold, when the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby leaped in my womb for joy. Then, she blessed Mary for believing that there would be a fulfillment of what had been spoken to her. All of us are blessed when we believe what the Lord tells us in His word, through an angel, or through a prophecy from others.

(Lk 1:43-45) "And how has it *happened* to me, that the mother of my Lord would come to me? {44} For behold, when the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby leaped in my womb for joy. {45} And blessed *is* she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what had been spoken to her by the Lord."

Before moving on, I want to make a point about prophecy. In general, there are three purposes of prophecy. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 14:3 that prophecy is to edify, exhort, or to console others. That is prophecy at a congregational level.

(1 Co 14:3) "But one who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation."

There are different levels of prophecy. In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul wrote that there are a variety of gifts, ministries, and effects. There are some gifts that are given to us, and are referred to as our motivational or primary gift. I have the gift of teaching. I think like a teacher. There are also effects or manifestation gifts that can come on any of us at any time. I do not have the gift of prophecy, but I occasionally get a prophetic word, which is a prophetic manifestation.

(1 Co 12:4-6) "Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. {5} And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. {6} There are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all *persons*."

There are also ministry gifts. A ministry gift is at a higher level. It is a gift that has been developed and it operates at a different level. Someone with a gift of teaching may teach Sunday school or a small group, while someone with a teaching ministry will also be teaching congregations. Someone with a gift of prophecy or having a manifestation of prophecy should be giving prophecies that edify, console, or exhort. Someone with a ministry of prophecy operates at a higher level.

Prophecy is mentioned as a gift, ministry, and effect; it is in all three lists. Someone can have the gift of prophecy. Another person may have a manifestation of prophecy, but not have the gift of prophecy. Another person, like Barnabas or Silas, did not have a local gift of prophecy, but had a ministry of prophecy. These are seasoned prophets who God has raised up, and are often referred to as five-fold prophets. Someone with the gift of prophecy will not operate in the same sphere as someone with the ministry of prophecy.

Many people try to give corrective words through prophecy, or pronounce judgment on people and nations, and they do not have the calling or anointing to operate in that realm. God appointed Jeremiah to be a prophet to the nations. He was appointed to pluck up, break down, destroy, overthrow, build, and to plant. This is not a congregational level; this is a ministry level at the highest level. The rule for believers at the congregational level is that prophecy should edify, exhort, or console.

(Je 1:5-10) "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, And before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations... {10} "See, I have appointed you this day over the nations and over the kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant."

A blessing like Elizabeth gave Mary, edified or built up the faith of Mary. When we prophesy to others, we should be seeking to edify them. If the word that you think you have does not edify or console, it may not be a word from the Lord, or it may be something that you are to pray for the person, but not share with them. Elizabeth prophesied when the Holy Spirit came on her, and this was probably just a prophetic manifestation. She prophesied three blessings, which is very much in line with what most prophecy should do.

### 3. **Mary's prophetic response** (Lk 1:46-55)

After being blessed by Elizabeth, Mary responds by exalting the Lord. She said, "My soul exalts the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior." There are ten specific praises within Mary's praises. The first thing that she praises God for is that He has had regard for the humble state of His bondservant, and that from this time on all generations will count her as blessed. She has responded to Elizabeth's prophetic blessing of being "blessed among women."

(Lk 1:46-48) "And Mary said: 'My soul exalts the Lord, {47} and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. {48} For He has had regard for the humble state of His bondservant; for behold, from this time on all generations will count me blessed.'"

When Gabriel told her she would become pregnant, she had responded by saying, "Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word." She regarded herself as a bondservant of the Lord. I think that her humble view of herself is a great example for all of us. Jesus taught His disciples many times about being humble servants. Paul considered himself a humble bondservant. All of us are that have confessed Jesus as Lord have become His servants, and we need to walk in that humble state. When we are in a humble state, we are grateful for whatever God does for us, and Mary is very grateful to the Lord for having regard of her.

The second thing that she praises God for is that the Mighty One has done great things for her. She has an attitude of thanksgiving. God does great things for all of us, and sometimes we don't take the time to look at all the things that God does for each of us.

(Lk 1:49) "For the Mighty One has done great things for me; and holy is His name."

The third thing that Mary praised God for was his holiness. She said, "Holy is His name." Notice how Mary knows the Lord. She describes Him as the Mighty One, and then as the Holy One. She is filled with awe and reverence for God.

Fourth, Mary praises God for His mercy. She said, "His mercy is upon generation after generation towards those who fear Him." All of us can praise Him for His mercy. Because of our sins, our wages were death, but because of His mercy, He has forgiven us, and He sent Jesus to die for our sins. We should all praise God for His mercy.

(Lk 1:50) "And His mercy is upon generation after generation toward those who fear Him."

Fifth, Mary praises God for His mighty deeds. The Psalms are full of praises for the mighty deeds that God did. The Scriptures are full of His mighty deeds. In the very beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. He created every plant, flower, tree, insect, animal, bird, and creature on earth. His creation is just the beginning of His mighty deeds. When we consider all the mighty deeds of God, we will never run out of things to praise God about.

(Lk 1:51) "He has done mighty deeds with His arm; He has scattered *those who were* proud in the thoughts of their heart."

Then Mary begins to praise God for some of the specific things. Her sixth praise is that God has scattered those who were proud in the thoughts of their heart. Her seventh praise is from bringing down rulers from their thrones. God is sovereign and is over all the rulers of the earth. The hearts



of kings are like channels of water in the hand of the Lord, and He directs them wherever He desires.

(Lk 1:52) "He has brought down rulers from *their* thrones, and has exalted those who were humble."

(Pr 21:1) "The king's heart is *like* channels of water in the hand of the Lord; He turns it wherever He wishes."

Her eighth praise is that God has exalted those who were humble. Both James and Peter capture this, saying that God opposes the proud and exalts the humble. Therefore, Peter urges us to humble ourselves before the Lord.

(Jas 4:6) "But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, "God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

(1 Pe 5:5–6) "You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble. {6} Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time,"

Mary's ninth praise is that God has filled the hungry with good things and sent away the rich empty-handed. We should continually thank God for His provision in our lives, and for providing us with good things. James wrote that every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming from the Father of lights. He fills our lives with good things, and we should not forget any of His countless benefits.

(Lk 1:53) "He has filled the hungry with good things; and sent away the rich empty-handed."

(Jas 1:17) "Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow."

Tenth, Mary praises God for giving help to Israel His servant, in remembrance of His mercy. She mentions that God spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and his descendants forever. God gives help to all of us, and He remembers each one of us. In Isaiah 49, God asks a rhetorical question, "Can a woman forget her nursing child and have no compassion on the son of her womb?" Then He said, "Even these may forget, but I will not forget you. Behold, I have inscribed you on the palms *of My hands*; your walls are continually before Me." God always remembers us and gives us help out of His mercy.

(Lk 1:54) "He has given help to Israel His servant, in remembrance of His mercy, {55} as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and his descendants forever."

(Is 49:15–16) "Can a woman forget her nursing child and have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, but I will not forget you. {16} "Behold, I have inscribed you on the palms *of My hands*; your walls are continually before Me."

#### 4. **Mary's return home** (Lk 1:56)

Luke records that Mary stayed with Elizabeth for three months. She was probably a great help to Elizabeth in her final three months of pregnancy. Elizabeth and Zacharias are advanced in age, and being pregnant in her old age could have been difficult. Mary was a bondservant, and I am sure that she served Elizabeth and Zacharias well in her three months with them. She probably helped with the cleaning, cooking, shopping, laundry, and other things that would have been difficult for her to do. Additionally, Zacharias can't talk. Because he did not believe the message that Gabriel brought him, Gabriel made him mute until John was born, so Mary probably served Zacharias as well.

(Lk 1:56) "And Mary stayed with her about three months, and *then* returned to her home."

After three months, Mary returned to her home, which was in Nazareth. It would take her five to seven days to get back home. I suspect that her parents, siblings, or other relative came to take her back home. I don't believe that she came by herself, and I do not believe she made the week-long trek back home by herself.

### **Conclusion and Applications**

After Gabriel visited Mary, six months after he had visited Elizabeth, she hurried to go see Elizabeth, who lived about a hundred miles away. When she greeted Elizabeth, both Elizabeth and her baby in her womb, John the Baptist, were filled with the Holy Spirit. This was a fulfillment of what Gabriel had prophesied to Zachariah.

#### **1. Develop the habit of blessing others.**

After being filled with the Holy Spirit, Elizabeth prophesied to Mary. In her prophecy, she gave three blessings. Prophecy is primarily given to comfort, exhort, and edify, and her blessings certainly edified Mary. Our first application comes from Elizabeth's blessings. We need to develop the habit of blessing others. Our greetings should bless others. Our conversations should bless others. In Hebrews 10, God tells us to consider how we can stimulate one another to love and good deeds. In 1 Corinthians 14, Paul tells us to pursue love, and to earnestly desire spiritual gifts, especially prophecy. Why prophecy? Because prophecy edifies the other person. Ask God for prophetic words for people. Consider ways to bless and edify other people. Elizabeth is a great example of someone who blessed others.

(Heb 10:24) "and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds,"

(1 Co 14:1) "Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual *gifts*, but especially that you may prophesy."

#### **2. Fill your mind with psalms and hymns**

Mary responded to Elizabeth's prophetic blessings, by prophesying and praising God. She exalted the Lord for ten things. A second application is to fill your minds with the Psalms. Notice that Mary knew the Psalms. She quotes excerpts of Psalms 34:1, 103:17, 98:1, 118:15, and 107:9. She knows the Psalms and uses them in her praise. The more scriptures we know, the easier it is to give praise to God. Mary is filled with prophetic praise, and scriptures help us in prophecy also.

There is a saying about prophecy, "Much Word, much prophecy; little Word, little prophecy." We need to fill our minds with the Word of God. When Paul encourages us in Ephesians to be filled with the Spirit, he exhorts us to speak to one another in psalms and hymns. In order to do that, we have to have these psalms and hymns in our hearts, which Mary had.

(Eph 5:18–20) "And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, {19} speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; {20} always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father;"

### **3. Learn God's names.**

The third application is to learn God's names. God's names are significant and reveal who He is. Use those names in your praises. Notice the names that Mary used in exalting God. First, she exalted the Lord. Second, she rejoiced in "God my Savior." Third, she mentions the Mighty One. Knowing the various names of God helps us give praises to God.

I use the alphabet in my personal praise times. I begin by praising God for being my Abba, Father. I praise Him for being the Alpha and Omega. I praise Him for being Adonai, the Sovereign Lord. I praise Him for being the Almighty God. I praise Him for being the Author and Perfector of our faith. I put together a prayer manual many years ago and have pages of God's various names. Every once in a while I refresh my memory by reviewing those names.

### **4. Get to know God.**

The fourth application is to get to know God, not just His names. Learn about God's character and His ways. In Psalm 103:7, we learn that Moses knew God's ways, but Israel just knew His acts, the things He did. Moses knew God and he understood why God did what he did.

(Ps 103:7) "He made known His ways to Moses, His acts to the sons of Israel."

As you read, ask yourself, "what does this reveal about God?" Mary knew the character of God. She praises His holy name. She praises God for His mercy generation after generation. She recognizes that He is over all the earth, and over all the rulers of the earth; He is sovereign. She praises God for helping us. She praises God for being generous and giving us good things. She praises God for speaking to us. Mary does not just know the names of God; she knows all about God. We learn about God in the scriptures, and we need to get to know God, and it will help us in exalting Him.

### **Closing Prayer**

Father God, thank You for the example of Mary and Elizabeth. Thank You for Your Spirit, and for making us temples of Your Spirit. Help us to fill our temples with praises and thanksgivings, so we can be filled with Your Spirit. I pray that You will release more prophetic words to us. Help us learn to bless others and to edify one another. Help us to fill our minds with psalms and hymns that will help us in our praise of You. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

**Discussion Questions**

- Think of a time that you were filled with the Holy Spirit. Where were you, and what were you doing? How did you get filled with the Holy Spirit? Did you get a prophetic word or something else when you were filled?
- We saw in the text numerous truths about unborn babies. Elizabeth was six months pregnant when John heard the voice, and leaped for joy in her womb. Has this changed or strengthened your view about the sanctity of life? Has this given you further information to share with others?
- If the church began to bless one another, and to edify one another with prophecy, what would be the impact on the church and on individual lives?
- Mary found ten things to praise God about. When you spend time with the Lord, do you take time to thank God? Do you take time to praise Him for His names and for His character? Do you pray and praise Him using psalms and other scriptures? What are some things that you can personally apply for the example that Mary gave us?
- What are some disciplines that we can do to fill our minds with the psalms and hymns so that we can speak to one another with psalms and hymns?

## **Mary's Visit with Elizabeth**

### **Introduction**

1. **Mary's arrival and greeting** (Lk 1:26-40, Jos 21:11–13, Ex 18:5–7, Ro 16:16, 1 Co 16:20, 2 Co 13:12, 1 Th 5:26, 1 Pe 5:14)
2. **Elizabeth's filling and prophetic blessing** (Lk 1:41-45, Lk 6:23, Lk 1:15-17, Ps 139:13-16, Je 1:5-10, Gal 1:15, Ac 19:6, 2:14–18, Joe 2:28-29, Re 1:10–11, Lk 1:28, 1 Co 14:3, 12:4-6)
3. **Mary's prophetic response** (Lk 1:46-55, Pr 21:1, Jas 4:6, 1 Pe 5:5-6, Jas 1:17, Is 49:15–16)
4. **Mary's return home** (Lk 1:56)

### **Conclusion and Applications**

1. (Heb 10:24, 1 Co 14:1)
2. (1 Co 14:1, Ps 34:1, 103:17, 98:1, 118:15, 107:9, Eph 5:18-20)
- 3.
4. (Ps 103:7)