

Mary's Magnificat

The surprise visitor, Gabriel the archangel, has left Mary when we arrive at Luke 1:39. What was this teenager thinking now that she is sitting all alone once again? Angels do not regularly pop in and out of our lives today, nor did they back in her time. What was she thinking once he was gone? Did she feel special that she had been visited? She must have been thrilled that she had seen an angel. Her thoughts must have been jumping from one thing to another. She must have been excited to know that she had been selected to be the mother of the holy child called the Messiah. But did she really understand that He was to be the Son of God - God Himself? We have already discovered that the expression "Son of God" was another way of saying that Jesus was God. Did she try to remember the Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah? Did she dream about her future and her son's future - the Messiah - in her sleep? We can be sure of one thing. She was dwelling on the angel's words and watching for the first sign that she was pregnant. Mary finally decided to go see Elizabeth. She was someone who would understand Mary because she now had a miracle baby too!

VISIT TO ELIZABETH. We are not told anything about Mary's parents. We do not know if they were alive or dead. It is doubtful that whomever she lived with would have believed a teenaged girl when she said that she would become pregnant by the Holy Spirit. It is more likely that her parents would have thought she had been having sexual relations with some boy - maybe her prospective husband. Did she try to tell them? Did they reject her story? We can be sure that she understood the implications of an unmarried woman getting pregnant in that culture and time. She was wise and realized that she needed help, counsel, and information.

So Mary decided to visit Elizabeth, the very woman that Gabriel said would also have a miracle birth - she had been unable to have children and now she was pregnant in her old age. Elizabeth was the wife of a priest of Israel, and he would understand the Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah - Mary's son. They would understand that a miracle pregnancy could occur. They would be a comfort to her and help her understand what was written about her son.

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

Maybe they could help her with her parents or whoever was taking care of her. Eventually, Mary packed her bags, gathered some food, and hurried from Nazareth down to the hill country around the city of Hebron or to the city of Hebron itself. It was a journey of about 100 miles (160.9 Km). In her time that would have taken maybe a week or more to travel. She would have a lot of time to think and perhaps worry.

GOD OF COMFORT. When she arrived at Elizabeth's home, she apparently just walked in and said, "Hello, I am here!"

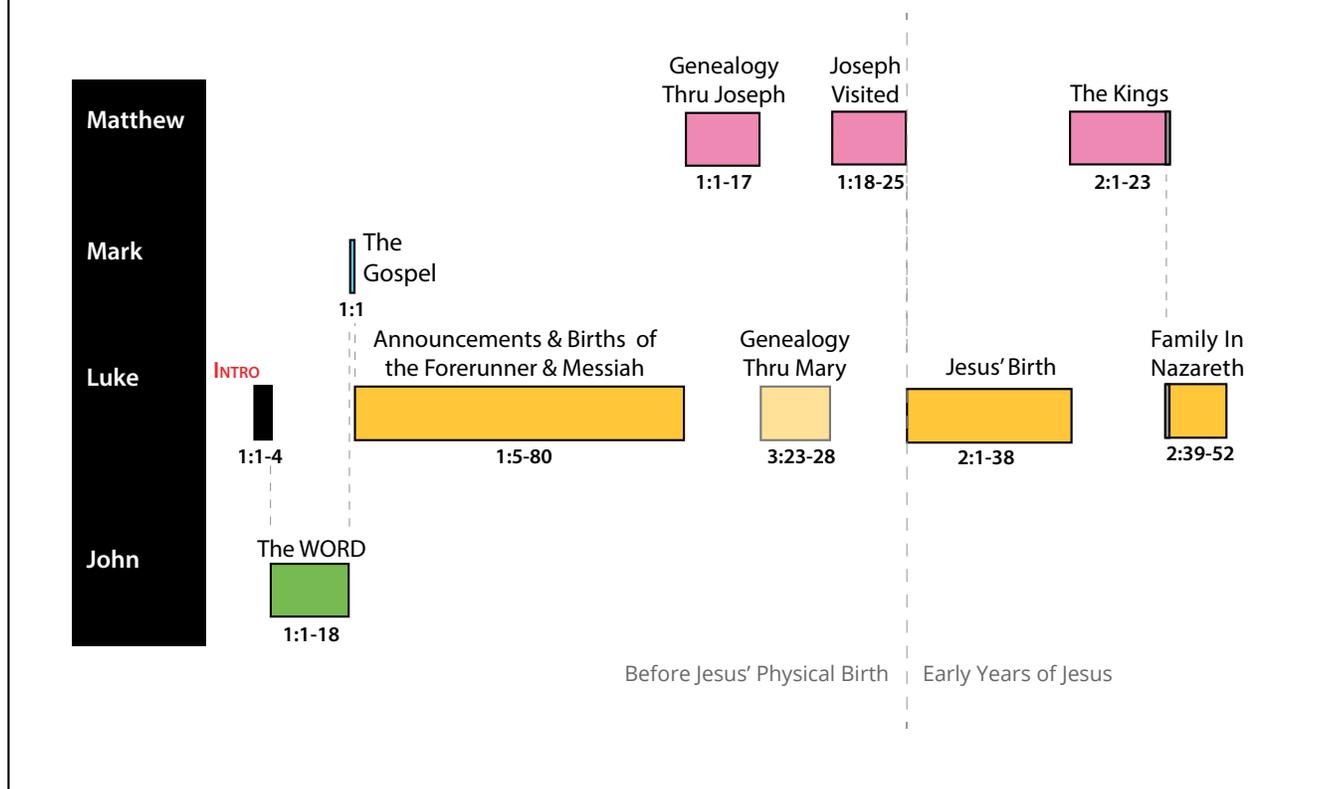
When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. (NASB) Luke 1:41

And God comforted Mary and blessed Elizabeth. We are not told everything in scripture, but Mary must have explained her situation to Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard the good news, Elizabeth's baby quickly moved in the womb. Elizabeth, being filled with the Holy Spirit, knew immediately that Mary had told the truth.

Elizabeth responded with a song. There are three songs in the first chapter of Luke: Elizabeth's, Mary's, and Zach-

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rias' song. Elizabeth immediately responded with,

And she cried out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! 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. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what had been spoken to her by the Lord." (NASB) Luke 1:42-45

Elizabeth's song was about Mary. She understood by the power of the Holy Spirit that Mary's baby would be the Messiah. Elizabeth knew that God did not approve of unbelief. Zacharias was unable to speak or hear as a result of his unbelief as we will see in our next study. So because Mary believed God, Elizabeth praised her. God used Elizabeth to comfort a humble, helpless youth named Mary. The God of comfort used Elizabeth. She was His tool.

If Mary had stayed home, she might have struggled with those around her when they stared at her stomach or made rude comments. But God knew that she needed to hear that Elizabeth had been visited by heaven. She needed to hear from a priest of Israel and his wife that she, Mary, was blessed and the soon-to-be mother of the one for whom they were all waiting.

MARY'S SONG. So out of a heart of joy and thankfulness, this faithful woman - Mary - finally praises God,

And Mary said: My soul exalts the Lord, And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. For He has had regard for the humble state of His bonds slave; for behold, from this time on all generations will count me blessed. For the Mighty One has done great things for me; and holy is His name. (NASB) Luke 1:46-49

Mary's words are like an open door to her tender heart. They allow us to peek inside and see her emotions. Her first words

reveal that she considered herself to be a sinner who needed a savior when she said, “God my Savior.” A holy person does not need a savior - only sinners. It is wonderful to see her openly admit her need. She is an example of humility.

Her next words reveal her submissive heart to God when she describes herself as “humble” and “His servant.” Proverbs tells us that a proud man or woman will be brought low.

**A man’s pride will bring him low,
But a humble spirit will obtain honor.
(NASB) Prov. 29:23**

Humility is more than not bragging about one’s self. Humility is submission. Look at 1 Peter 5:5,

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. (NASB) 1 Pet. 5:5

Notice that submission to the elders is connected with humility. Humility is more than not bragging about yourself. A humble man or woman will defer to others and willingly submit. Mary did just that. She submitted to God because she was humble. Next Mary focuses on God’s mercy, mighty deeds, power, care, justice, and faithfulness.

AND HIS MERCY IS UPON GENERATION AFTER GENERATION TOWARD THOSE WHO FEAR HIM. He has done mighty deeds with His arm; He has scattered those who were proud in the thoughts of their heart. He has brought down rulers from their thrones, and has exalted those who were humble. HE HAS FILLED THE HUNGRY WITH GOOD THINGS; and sent away the rich empty-handed. He has given help to Israel His servant, in remembrance of His mercy, as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and his descendants forever.” (NASB) Luke 1:50-55

Throughout the passage she continues the theme of God’s mercy and His concern for the humble and the hungry. God has a heart of love and compassion. God wanted to comfort Mary, and she reveals that this has occurred when she

responds in praise and worship to Him. Mary’s song reveals her heart. Oh, what a beautiful woman!

CONCLUSION. This comforted woman praises God for being holy and caring for the humble, hungry, and helpless. Ultimately, holiness is the reason that God does anything. We do not completely understand holiness, because we are sinners. We cannot understand a perfectly moral God who can be righteously angry at sinners, absolutely just when He punishes men and women for sin, and loving when He does not want us worshipping other gods. We do not understand these things about God because we have only a sinful perspective. The eye glasses through which all of us see life are tinted with sin. Our view of life and of Him comes from a darkened perspective. So we think, evaluate, and make conclusions in sinful terms. But God is not like us. He is holy in all that He does. He cared for Mary - a sinner who one day was saved by grace!

God cares for His humble, hungry, and helpless ones. She praised Him for doing just that. But isn’t this also exactly what her son will be like? She may not have realized what she was saying, but Mary was describing Jesus. We read in Matthew,

Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. (NASB) Matt. 11:29

Jesus was gentle and humble. Jesus did not just act humble or gentle, He was humble and gentle from the inside out. Jesus cared for the hungry, healed the sick, and cared for the helpless. He had compassion on the poor, sinners, and multitudes.

When Mary described God, she described her unborn Son in her Magnificat. Jesus was the one who would comfort her some day and bring her to heaven. God would comfort her again some day. God is in the business of comforting us. He comforts His children who humbly trust Him. Thank you, Father. Please help us to humbly and willingly submit, and thank you for comforting us when we do. Thank you, Father.