

Mary and Elisabeth

Key Verses: *“It came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit: And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.”*
—Luke 1:41,42

Selected Scripture:
Luke 1:39-45,56

MARY’S EXAMPLE OF faithfulness and obedience to God’s instruction speaks loudly to her character. The Scriptures indicate that both Mary and Joseph were pious people, as demonstrated by their annual trips to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. (Luke 2:41) The fact that Mary was chosen to be the mother of Jesus according to the flesh was a testimony to her nobility and purity of heart before God.

Our Key Verses point out that Mary came to visit Elisabeth and saluted her in a loving way upon entering her home. In response, Elisabeth spoke the message that Mary was highly favored and blessed among women. Earlier, the angel Gabriel had reassured Mary. First, he reminded her of the prophecies relating to the promised birth of Jesus. Being well versed in the Scriptures, Mary likely recalled the words of Isaiah 7:14: “The Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”

Second, Gabriel told Mary that the Holy Spirit—God’s power—would accomplish this miracle. He said,

“The power of the Highest shall overshadow thee.” (Luke 1:35) Perhaps this brought to her mind Exodus 40:34-38, in which God promised to overshadow the Israelites’ Tabernacle in the wilderness with the pillars of a cloud and of fire. To an Israelite such as Mary, it was comforting to believe that God would hover above her like an eagle over its nest with wings outspread, protecting, providing, and helping.

Gabriel then told Mary that her cousin Elisabeth was also about to bear a son. Elisabeth had been barren but had now conceived “in her old age.” (Luke 1:36) This additional miracle was enough to convince Mary that God was indeed able to perform whatever he desired, as Gabriel declared, “With God nothing shall be impossible.” (vs. 37) Mary might have also recalled these words of the prophet: “So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.”—Isa. 55:11

After hearing these reassurances and proofs from the angel Gabriel, Mary put the entire matter into the Lord’s hands with these beautiful words: “Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word.” (Luke 1:38) This loving and complete acceptance of God’s will is reminiscent of that which Hannah expressed concerning the miraculous birth of her son, Samuel: “My heart rejoiceth in the Lord, mine horn is exalted in the Lord: my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies; because I rejoice in thy salvation. There is none holy as the Lord: for there is none beside thee: neither is there any rock like our God.”—I Sam. 2:1,2

Let us be full of faith as Mary, knowing the prophecies concerning the call of the church, and remembering the begetting of God’s called ones as children of God. Let us remember that God will accomplish in us what he desires—the development of a bride for his Son, Christ Jesus.—I John 3:2; Rev. 19:7,8 ■