

Mary Visits Elizabeth

Luke 1: 39-45

DIG: How might Mary have felt when her relative Elizabeth greeted her like this? What was Miryam surprised about? How is Mary blessed and encouraged?

REFLECT: Who do you call first when you have special news to share? How does Mary's faith serve as a model for you? Has God ever provided you someone to share your joy in the impossible or to understand the peculiar place you find yourself in? How did that impact you? Can ADONAI use you to be that person for someone else?

Within a few days, **Mary** probably asked permission to visit her relative **Elizabeth**. Her mother most likely thought it was a touching sign of devotion, and sent her off with others traveling south to **Judea**. The young virgin said nothing about her secret. **At that time Mary left Galilee, got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea (Lk 1:39). She was obedient to Gabriel's message (Lk 1:36). Judea** was about a 100 miles to the south of Nazareth, and would be a four or five day journey according to their mode of travel.⁶² When she arrived, she entered **Zechariah's home and greeted Elisheva (Luke 1:40).**

Elizabeth was a remarkable person. She had faith while her husband **Zachariah** did not. He was struck dumb because of his unbelief, while **Elizabeth** spoke freely and encouraged **Mary**. **Elisheva** was gray and wrinkled, much older than **Mary**, and she had spent many years in the synagogue asking **God** for a child. **Elisheva's** husband was a priest who was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to go into the Temple of the LORD and burn incense (Luke 1:9). He loved his wife and understood her anguish of barrenness. In addition to feeling the loss of not being able to bear a child and all the joy that that would bring, barrenness was also seen by the community as **ADONAI's** punishment for sin. He had also prayed again and again for a child.

As **Miryam** came up the path, **Elisheva** was probably standing at the door. It was as though she had expected the visit. **Elizabeth's** immediate response to the sound of **Mary's** voice gave the old woman immediate confirmation of all that the angel had told her. When **Elisheva** heard **Miryam's** greeting, suddenly the baby leaped in her womb, and **Elizabeth** was filled with the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:41). This is another good verse against abortion. That which is in the mother's womb is treated as being a person in Scripture. While **John** will be a prophet of the Most High (Luke 1:76), **Jesus** is the Son of the Most High (Luke 1:32). While **John's** birth to a barren woman was indeed miraculous, **Yeshua's** birth to a virgin was, and is, unprecedented.⁶³

What was promised to **Zechariah (Luke 1:15)** was then fulfilled. **John** and **Elizabeth** were filled with the **Ruach HaKodesh** even before **his** birth. They were the first people to realize that **Mary's** child was **the Meshiach**.⁶⁴ Already the fetus in **Elizabeth** was performing the function to which **he** was born, being the herald of **the King**.

Then there was a special blessing upon **Miryam** because **she** believed the message of the angel, whereas **Elizabeth's** husband, **Zacharias**, did not believe, and it resulted in **him** being stricken mute. In a loud voice **Elisheva** cried out: **Blessed are you among women (Luke 1:42a)**. Notice that **Mary** was **blessed among** all women, not *above* all women. **And blessed is the child you will bear**, literally, *the fruit of your womb (Luke 1:42b*, also see **Genesis 30:2; Lamentations 2:20**)! In other words, **the Messiah's** birth was assured. **Mary** must have stopped in **her** tracts. **She** could hardly believe it. **She** couldn't speak. **Elizabeth** knew! **Elizabeth** knew the secret!

Elisheva probably wiped the tears from **her** eyes and tried to smile. **But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to visit me. As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed is she who has believed that ADONAI would fulfill His promises to her (Luke 1:43-45)**! **Elizabeth** was a remarkable person. **She** was a righteous woman, and like **her** husband, part of the Jewish believing remnant of their day. **She** then encouraged **Miryam** because **she** had walked with **God** for many years. **Elisheva** assured **Mary** that the message revealed to **her** by the angel **Gabriel** would come true.

When **Elizabeth** said that, it erased all the doubt from **her** mind. **Mary** had not doubted. **She** believed **Gabriel's** words, but **she** could not convince **herself** that **she** was the one, of all the women on earth, selected to bear **the Baby of the Most High**. But now **she** was convinced. **She** no longer tried to separate **herself** from the prophecy. **She** had told no one about the secret, and **Elisheva** not only knew about it, but **her** pregnancy was exactly as the angel had said it would be.⁶⁵