

“Mary arose...” Luke liked that word. He used it 60 times, in comparison to 22 times in the rest of the NT. But, “Mary arose in those days...” What days? The Ethiopic version renders it, “in that day”. But, it means that as soon as the angel was gone from her, she made ready for her journey. It was not an easy journey; it was not simply a quick jaunt across town. It would have been about 90 miles, as the crow flies, and she was not a flying crow. This was a major journey.

Why did she go immediately? Perhaps, it was to confirm the sign she had been given. If Elizabeth were truly pregnant, then that would verify the sign she had been given by Gabriel. Besides, she had a few things she needed to talk to Elizabeth about: The great things that God had done for both of them, the coming of the Messiah, and just to praise the name of God!

Mary was told of Elizabeth’s condition, and she wanted to share her news with Elizabeth. Mary was younger, and was not as far along in her pregnancy, and as such, it would normally be appropriate for her to make the trip. But, she was pregnant with the Messiah! As is befitting the mother of our Savior, she did not insist on the preference that her greater dignity gave her; she humbled herself, prepared herself, and made the journey herself.

Now, the angel had not told her that Elizabeth’s child was to be anyone of any importance; she did not know that he would be the forerunner of the Messiah. But, the news of his impending birth was given as a sign unto her. So, she rose, and with diligence went into the mountainous region of Judea.

What is diligence? It’s conscientiousness in paying proper attention to task and giving the degree of care required in a given situation. (Diligence is also a large stagecoach, but that’s beside the point.) The KJV says she arose with haste, and that would be a part of the diligence that she should be showing, but only a part. She was on an important mission. She had been given a sign to confirm what she had been told, and it was her responsibility to be diligent and verify it.

Now, when Zechariah had asked for a sign, he had been rebuked. However, think about where he was when he was given the sign. Who else would be there? Mary, on the other hand had been told something incredible, and she was given a sign to verify it.

So, she set out on her journey with diligence and went into the hill country into a city of Judah. Luke uses this adjective (mountainous) in this context (here and in Luke 1:65), instead of simply saying into the mountains. It’s an old word, and is used in the LXX, but nowhere else in the NT. It’s a region in the vicinity of Jerusalem that is commonly called the Hill country of Judea.

The name of the city in which Zechariah lived is not given, unless “Judah” here means “Jutta” (modern day “Yutta”; Joshua 15:55), but most people assume that he lived in

Hebron. Hebron was the chief city of this part of Judea, and was a home to priests. Jutta was less well known, but it was also a city of priests. They're fairly close together, so Mary's journey will be long, no matter where she's heading. Mary is making a journey of 85-90 miles, as the crow flies, if she's traveling from Nazareth to either Hebron or Yutta.

Verse 40 tells us that she completed the journey and she entered into the house of Zechariah and salutes Elizabeth. I'm sure she expressed great joy at seeing Elizabeth, and one glance told her that the sign that she had been given was true. Think about the emotions of Mary, as she arrives, and with her first glance at Elizabeth, she knows the truth of the sign that had been given her. With this realization, the promise she herself had been given, became a startling reality!

Elizabeth had kept herself close (she had not announced her pregnancy; she was going to let the pregnancy announce itself and announce the glory of God), but at six months, I'm sure she was showing enough for Mary to know and rejoice with Elizabeth in a common bond. As far as we know, Mary is the first person to know about the pregnancy besides Elizabeth and Zechariah.

Mary entered the house of Zechariah, but she saluted Elizabeth. It may have been because he wasn't home, or it could simply be because it's not usual for women to salute men, nor men to salute women. Remember back in Luke 1:29, Mary was troubled because it was uncommon for a man to salute a woman. But, one woman would probably salute another, and Mary especially saluted Elizabeth, because that's who she had come to visit and it was Elizabeth with whom she was primarily concerned at the moment. Besides, if she had saluted him, he was still deaf and dumb and would not have noticed.

This bond between Elizabeth and Mary was special. It was more than simply a bond between kinswomen who are both pregnant, yet neither knew the entire story yet. John was sent to prepare the path of the Lord. He does this even before he's born! [Luke 1:41] Mary, had no doubt kept her holy secret to herself; she probably assumed that God would make it known to whom it was necessary in His own time. Yet the moment she comes into the presence of the spirit-filled forerunner, even though he was still in his mother's womb (he's a child, even before he's born, no matter what the pro-abortionists tell you), he recognized and rejoiced in the presence of his Lord. Even babes in Christ, with little foundation in the Word can rejoice in the presence of the Lord! It would not be an uncommon occurrence for a baby to leap in his mother's womb, but Elizabeth was filled with a holy spirit (not the Holy Spirit here), and she was able to understand what had happened with Mary. Imagine the effect of this on Mary! The angel had told her of Elizabeth, and Elizabeth's words reveal the fact that she shares in Mary's joyous secret!

In verse 42, we have a Greek word [anaphOneO] that is a medical term for an exercise of the voice that is used nowhere else in the NT. It says that she "spoke out with a loud voice", but that doesn't impart the true impact of the word. "With a loud cry"; it's ecstatic emotion! She gave this emotional cry, and followed it with words, saying, "you

are most blessed among women!” This is a Hebraistic superlative. Most blessed! But, she’s not blessed above women; she’s blessed among women.

[Luke 1:43] Why is this honor done to me? What have I done to deserve this wonderful happening? Why do I have this honor that the mother of my Lord has come to me? “Lord”, (kurios) would be a more important term to the Greeks than Messiah, because they had not been anxiously awaiting the Messiah. The Septuagint uses the word “Lord” to translate “Yahweh”. This word Lord has deep meaning in this sense.

[Luke 1:44] Elizabeth isn’t envious, as some might be. She is above that; the Bible tells us that she is righteous. As high as the distinction is that has been bestowed upon Elizabeth (Luke 1:14 tells us that “many will rejoice at his birth...”), she notices only the presence of one who has been more highly honored than she. And as soon as the voice of Mary sounded, the baby leaped for joy. He wasn’t just happy, this word is exultant joy! It’s exultant joy that we should feel every time we hear God’s voice speaking to us through His word!

Elizabeth concludes her benediction by saying, [Luke 1:45]. It’s more of an additional benediction. Blessed is she who is believing; Mary has faith, and there’s substance to that faith. Elizabeth is encouraging Mary, she is fellowshiping with her, and telling her that she is blessed because she has faith, and is supporting her in continuing in that faith.

Verses 42-45 are poetry; they’re a song or a hymn. Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit speaks through her magnificently. Mary, likewise filled with the Holy Spirit, responds with a song of her own.

Elizabeth was excited; she was full of ecstatic emotion. Mary on the other hand, was calmer, more reposed, and more inwardly confident. She had been given a promise, and had been given a sign to confirm that promise. [Luke 1:46] “And Mary said...” She simply said. She didn’t cry out. She said, “My soul is magnifying the Lord”. Her soul (her life; the soul is the life of man) is magnifying (present, active) the Lord, Yahweh.

[Luke 1:47] “My spirit has rejoiced or exulted in God my Savior.” She’s not excited like Elizabeth, but she’s ecstatic; she’s exultant. Her soul is magnifying the Lord, and her spirit has rejoiced. The soul is the life of man, and the spirit is the point of contact between God and man, so to speak. It says, “My spirit has rejoiced in the God the Savior of me”. He is the God, and he is the Savior. There are no others. God is called the Savior throughout the OT, and this is consistent with that.

In the joy of these two women, we have a small taste of what the coming of Jesus into the world means. He’s the Messiah! He’s everything that entails! He’s not only the Messiah of the Jews, but of the entire world! Beginning with these two women, the widening circle will include His faithful followers, the entire nation of Israel, and all the nations of the world!

[1:48] “The low estate...” The poor bride of a poor carpenter, and yet to be the mother of the Messiah. This is in opposition to those in James 2 who give the good seats to those of means, and makes those that are poor to sit under the footstool. He regards the low estate of the servant, and shall elevate her, and she shall be called blessed for all generations. We can have blessings in the age to come also, if we humble ourselves now and serve the Lord. Do you want those blessings? I do.

[1:49] He does great things for me, too!

[1:50] “And His *mercy*...” This word emphasizes the misery that grace deals with. This is talking about human wretchedness and the impulse to relieve it, which is issued in God’s gracious ministry. Grace takes away the fault, mercy takes away the misery. Thank God that He gives us both grace and mercy!

His mercy is on them that fear Him, in a reverential fear, from generations unto generations. We need to fear God. Not in a trembling, “don’t strike me dead” type of fear, but in a reverential, awe-inspiring fear. If we do, He will bestow His mercy upon us forever.

[1:51] “He hath showed strength with His arm...” He has made might. This is a Hebrew expression that can be found in Isaiah 53:1, which says, “Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?” This is talking about Jesus.

The Holy Spirit is styled as the finger of God. Psalm 8:3 tells us, “When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained.” But, here in Luke chapter 1, it’s talking about Jesus, the arm of God. We find that the man of sin, the antichrist, will have his arm broken, but the arm of God shall be strong forever. The Finger of God created the heavens and the earth and wrote the 10 Commandments. The arm is where the strength is. This is the redemptive power manifested.

“He hath showed strength with His arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.” “Imagination” is intellectual insight or moral understanding; it’s the faculty of thought. He scatters the proud by their own intellectual insight. They’re not relying upon an understanding through God. He uses them as the instrument of their own destruction. 2 Corinthians 10:5 says, “Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” Don’t let your own intellectual insight or imaginations be your downfall. Don’t destroy yourselves!

[1:52] He pulls down princes from their thrones. That’s what this word that’s translated “mighty” is. Potentates. It’s the Greek word “dunastas”, from which we get our word dynasty. How many dynasties that were considered indestructible have been pulled down? Don’t be proud in your own power; remember that all power is from God.

[1:53, 54] “He hath holpen...” This word means to lay hold on or to grasp helpfully. It’s used in the sense of partaking. [1 Timothy 6:2] This sense carries us back to the

original meaning of the word according to its composition, to receive instead of or in return. It suggests the idea of “to take up for”, or “to espouse the cause of”. What He has done, is, “He has stood up for his servant Israel.” Isaiah 41:8 says, “But thou, Israel, *art* my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend.” He supported Israel, His dear servant, to be reminded of His mercy.

[1:55] The first phrase is parenthetical, and it could read: “According as He spake to our fathers.” You can find where He spoke these promises to the fathers throughout the OT, and direct reference to these promises can be found in Micah 7:20, which says, “Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, *and* the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old,” and Psalm 98:3: “He hath remembered his mercy and his truth toward the house of Israel: all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.”

[1:55] “And to his seed forever”. This is talking about the endurance of Messiah’s Kingdom, as expressly promised by the angel in verse 33.

[Luke 1:33] “And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever,” or literally, into the ages. Not over just the Jews in a literal sense, who are the posterity of Jacob, but over all believers, both Jew and Gentile. Just as David reigned over the Idumeans, Syrians and others, as well as over the house of Judah and Israel, so also Jesus, the Son of David shall reign over both Jews and Gentiles. His Kingdom will be from one end of the earth to the other. I want to be a part of that Kingdom! We can all be a part of that Kingdom!

“And of his kingdom there shall be no end.” Luke tells us there will be no termination of this Kingdom. Isaiah 9:7 tells us, “Of the increase of *his* government and peace *there shall be* no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever.” Daniel 2:44 tells us, “And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never [to the ages shall not; the text does not say “never”] be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, *but* it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever [to the ages; not forever].” [The Emphasized Bible by J. B. Rotherham, an excellent translation, words it thus: “And, in the days of those kings, shall the God of the heavens, set up, a kingdom which, to the ages, shall not be destroyed, and, the kingdom, to another people, shall not be left, —it shall break in pieces and make an end of all these kingdoms, but, itself, shall stand to the ages.”]

[1 Corinthians 15:24-27] The reign of Christ is for ages or eons; it’s for a long, but limited time. He then gives up the Kingdom to God the Father. The Kingdom itself is endless.

[1:55] “And to his seed forever”. This is talking about the endurance of Messiah’s Kingdom, which is not forever, but for a thousand, glorious years. I want to be a part of that Kingdom! We can all be a part of that Kingdom! We can also miss out, if we’re not obedient and faithful servants. We want to hear, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant”.

[1:56] Mary spent three months under this honored roof, until about the time that John was born. Of this house or Mary's house, there's not a trace. But, their progeny have made the world new.

This beautiful hymn that Mary gives says it all. Did she spend the time on the road composing it, or was it just spuriously inspired by the Holy Spirit? I don't know, and the Bible doesn't say; this hymn is simple, yet profound. Let's read it again. [1:46-55]

Mary has responded with this beautiful magnificat or hymn of praise. It's simple, yet sublime. It reminds us of God's mercy and grace and magnificence. Those who magnify the Lord cannot help but be happy! Those who humble themselves will surely be blessed. She takes the place of a slave, and rejoices to own Him as her Lord. We should do the same.

She knows herself to be an obscure, poor, despised laborer, and suddenly she has become exceedingly favored among women. A woman to whom all women will bestow praise. But, her thoughts are not of herself alone. Her case is that God will scatter the proud and exalt the low. He will visit downtrodden Israel and place them on the throne. He will stand up for them.

He is showing mercy to His people, and He will perform all the promises made to Abraham and the prophets. Yet, many who were looking for the Messiah were worried about things of the flesh, when He was offering something much, much more. Do we look to God for things of the flesh? He will provide those also, but that doesn't need to be our primary concern.

[2 Corinthians 1] Now that He has begun to show mercy to His people, He will perform all the promises made to Abraham and the prophets. [2 Corinthians 1:20-22] [For whatever promises *are* of God, *are* in Him "Yes." Wherefore through Him also *is* the "Amen" to God, for glory, through us. Now *He* Who is confirming us together *with* you in Christ, and anoints us, *is* God, Who also seals us and *is* giving the earnest of the spirit in our hearts.] "For whatever promises are of God, are in Him, "Yes!" His promises will come true. All of them!

[2 Corinthians 1:21] "Establishes." This was a metaphor in Corinth when confirmation of a bargain was made. A bargain has been made for us, and that has been confirmed through his promise! All His promises are good! He has sealed us unto that great day that is coming soon.

He is the pledge of the performance of every promise God has made, for the Seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head, and by His bruised heel, shall bring in blessing far beyond the prophets' most delightful, wonderful, and enraptured predictions. The bliss begins with His mother Mary. We can have that bliss as a free gift, and we need to honor that free gift in everything we do! We need to fear the Lord; we need to honor and obey Him, and bring glory and honor to His name.