

## **Elizabeth and Mary**

**Luke 1:57** Now Elizabeth's full time came for her to be delivered, and she brought forth a son. **:58** When her neighbors and relatives heard how the Lord had shown great mercy to her, they rejoiced with her.

**Luke 1:59** So it was, on the eighth day, that they came to circumcise the child; and they would have called him by the name of his father, Zacharias.

**Luke 1:60** His mother answered and said, "No; he shall be called John."

**Luke 1:61** But they said to her, "There is no one among your relatives who is called by this name." **:62** So they made signs to his father—what he would have him called.

**Luke 1:63** And he asked for a writing tablet, and wrote, saying, "His name is John." So they all marveled. **:64** Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, praising God. **:65** Then fear came on all who dwelt around them; and all these sayings were discussed throughout all the hill country of Judea.

**Luke 1:66** And all those who heard them kept them in their hearts, saying, "What kind of child will this be?" And the hand of the Lord was with him.

**Luke 1:67** Now his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying:

Freed now from the fetters of unbelief and filled with the Holy Spirit, Zacharias was inspired to utter an eloquent hymn of praise, rich in quotations from the OT.

**Luke 1:68** "Blessed is the Lord God of Israel, For He has visited and redeemed His people, **:69** And has raised up a horn of salvation for us In the house of His servant David,

Praise to God for what He had done. Zacharias realized that the birth of his son, John, indicated the imminence of the coming of the Messiah.

He spoke of Christ's advent as an accomplished fact before it happened.

Faith enabled him to say God had already visited and redeemed His people by sending the Redeemer.

Jehovah had raised up a horn of salvation in the royal house of ... David. (A horn was used to hold the oil for anointing kings; therefore it might mean here a King of salvation from the kingly line of David. Or it might be a symbol of power and thus mean "a powerful Savior.")

**Luke 1:70** As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets, Who have been since the world began, **:71** That we should be saved from our enemies And from the hand of all who hate us,

Praise to God for fulfilling prophecy. The coming of the Messiah had been predicted by the holy prophets ... since the world began. It would mean salvation from one's enemies and safety from foes.

**Luke 1:72** To perform the mercy promised to our fathers And to remember His holy covenant, **:73** The oath which He swore to our father Abraham: **:74** To grant us that we, Being delivered from the hand of our enemies, Might serve Him without fear, **:75** In holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life.

Praise to God for His faithfulness to His promises. The Lord had made an unconditional covenant of salvation with Abraham. This promise was fulfilled by the coming of Abraham's seed, namely, the Lord Jesus Christ. The salvation He brought was both external and internal. Externally, it meant deliverance from the hand of their enemies. Internally, it meant serving Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness.

G. Campbell Morgan brings out two striking thoughts on this passage. First, he points out the arresting connection between the name of John and the theme of the song—both are the grace of God. Then he finds allusions to the names of John, Zacharias and Elizabeth in verses 72 and 73. John—the mercy promised (v. 72). Zacharias—to remember (v. 72). Elizabeth—the oath (v. 73).

God's favor, as announced by John, results from His remembering the oath of His holy covenant.

**Luke 1:76 “And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Highest; For you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways, :77 To give knowledge of salvation to His people By the remission of their sins,**

The mission of John, the Savior’s herald. John would be the prophet of the Most High, preparing the hearts of the people for the coming of the Lord, and proclaiming salvation to His people through the forgiveness of their sins.

Here again we see that references to Jehovah in the OT are applied to Jesus in the New. Malachi predicted a messenger to prepare the way before Jehovah (3:1). Zacharias identifies John as the messenger. We know that John came to prepare the way before Jesus. The obvious conclusion is that Jesus is Jehovah.

**Luke 1:78 Through the tender mercy of our God, With which the Dayspring from on high has visited us; :79 To give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, To guide our feet into the way of peace.”**

Christ’s coming is likened to the sunrise. For centuries, the world had lain in darkness. Now through the tender mercy of our God, dawn was about to break. It would come in the Person of Christ, shining on the Gentiles who were in darkness and the shadow of death, and guiding Israel’s feet into the way of peace (see Mal. 4:2).

**Luke 1:80 So the child grew and became strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his manifestation to Israel.**

The chapter closes with a simple statement that the child grew physically and spiritually, remaining in the deserts till the day of his public appearance to the nation of Israel.

**Luke 2:1 And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered.**

A decree from Caesar Augustus. Augustus was the grandnephew of Julius Caesar, and was adopted as his son. After the murder of Julius Caesar, young Octavius Augustus ruled with Mark Anthony and Lepidus in a triumvirate. Then for more than forty years, from 27 b.c. to a.d. 14, Augustus served by himself as the first emperor of the Roman Empire. It was during his reign that Christ was born.

All the world indicates only the twenty-seven provinces ruled by the Roman Senate and the emperor. Taxed (Gr *apographō*), better translated as enrolled, signifies a census, upon which basis perhaps a future taxation would be made.

**Luke 2:2 This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria.**

Syria was the most important of all the Roman provinces, and Quirinius (Cyrenius) served in several capacities there at different times. Roman censuses came every fourteen years. The first one of which we have recorded knowledge came in a.d. 6. This earlier census then may have been set in motion in Rome about 8 b.c., while Quirinius was the military governor of Syria. Several years would be required to complete such a census.

**Luke 2:3 So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city. :4 Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, :5 to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child. :6 So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered.**

Joseph had to travel from Nazareth, where he was living, to Beth-lehem for the census, because he was a descendant of King David of Beth-lehem. Mary accompanied Joseph on the sixty-five-mile journey.

**Luke 2:7 And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.**

With no midwife to help, Mary wrapped baby Jesus in long bands of cloth such as were used in wrapping the bodies of the dead.

That He was born to die is perhaps intimated here and in the later gift of myrrh from the wise men (Mt 2:11). Manger is a cattle-feeding trough. No room for them in the inn. All these things suggest poverty, loneliness, and even rejection (see 2 Cor 8:9).