

ELIZABETH'S SUPERNATURAL PROCLAMATION: A VERY UNUSUAL TESTIMONY LUKE 01:39-45

Introduction

Whatever confession was borne about the Baby conceived in Mary was of critical importance. Why? Because the baby was...

- Jesus (v. 31).
- The Son of the Most High (v. 32).
- The Son of David (v. 32).
- The Ruler over the house of Jacob forever (v. 33).
- The Ruler whose kingdom will never end (v. 33).
- The One born of the Holy Spirit (v. 35).
- The Son of God Himself (v. 35).

In this passage God sees to it that a supernatural confession is proclaimed, a crucial confession that needs to be studied in depth. Note that this is the very first testimony ever given by human lips about Jesus.

- I. Mary visited Elizabeth (vv. 39-42).
- II. Elizabeth proclaimed a uniqueness about Mary and her child (v. 42).
- III. Elizabeth proclaimed the child to be her Lord (vv. 43-44).
- IV. Elizabeth proclaimed that Mary's faith would receive the promise (v. 45).

I. *Luke 01: 39-42 Memorable Visit of Mary*

Mary visited Elizabeth, and her visit was memorable. She *hurried* (spoudes). The word means speed, diligence, care, earnestness, zeal. The idea is that Mary went with purpose and earnestness. She was not going on a casual, friendly visit. She had a very specific reason for going, a meaningful purpose. She was going so that she and Elizabeth could encourage and share with each other. They both had similar situations. God had acted upon both their bodies, performing a miracle for both. Elizabeth's womb was made alive for the son of Zechariah to be conceived, and Mary's womb had conceived as a virgin. Mary in particular could be encouraged, for Elizabeth was already six months pregnant. The six months' pregnancy was visible evidence that God had already acted upon her miraculously. It should be noted that Mary knew about Elizabeth's miraculous conception, but Elizabeth did not know about Mary's conception. Zechariah and Elizabeth lived in

Judah. The town is unknown today, but most commentators think it was the same as Hebron. Hebron is said to be in the hill country of Judah and to belong to the priests (Josh. 21:10-11).

Mary entered Elizabeth's home and greeted her. It was at the *very moment* of Mary's greeting that Elizabeth's supernatural greeting began. Mary greeted Elizabeth, and three unusual things immediately happened.

1. The baby leaped in Elizabeth's womb. The baby had leaped or kicked before, but this leap was different from all the others. It was a sign to Elizabeth that the Baby within Mary was someone very, very special, someone who was about to be revealed to her under the filling (influence) of the Holy Spirit.
2. Elizabeth was instantly "filled with the Holy Spirit," and a very special spirit of prophecy was given her. The Holy Spirit seized her and led her to greet Mary as the mother of the Messiah, the coming Lord. Note: Elizabeth was living an obedient life before God. This was the reason God was able to use her and the Holy Spirit was able to infill her with His presence.
3. Elizabeth spoke in a loud voice. She was full of joy and exaltation for the Messiah, full of unusual emotions. She was under the influence and impulse of the Spirit of God. She was being guided to proclaim that the Baby of Mary was "the Lord" (v. 43, 45).

II. *Luke 01: 42 The Unique Proclamation of Elizabeth*

Elizabeth proclaimed a uniqueness about Mary and her child. Note three things.

1. The very first act toward Christ was a *proclamation of praise*. Elizabeth was the *first* person to know about the birth of Christ other than Mary, and God saw to it that her first act was to honour His Son. God would have His Son to be honoured on earth even as He is honoured in heaven.

Heb 13:15 Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise – the fruit of lips that confess his name.

1 Pet 2:9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

2. Mary was blessed, but she was blessed because of the child she was to bear: the child was blessed.
3. Elizabeth demonstrated a very sweet and humble spirit, a meekness and love that were so desperately needed by so many. She was older, and by being the wife of a priest, she was recognized by the world as being of a higher social class and more honourable.

Yet Mary, poor and unrecognized by the world, had been chosen by God to serve in a more special way. Elizabeth showed no envy or jealousy, no hurt or withdrawal. Contrariwise, she rejoiced over Mary's call.

Phil 2:3-4 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

III. Luke 01:43–44 The Great Confession of Elizabeth

Elizabeth proclaimed the child to be her Lord.

1. Note the great confession of Elizabeth. Elizabeth called Mary's Baby, "my Lord." In a moment of quickening power, the Holy Spirit revealed that the Baby was not only the promised Messiah, but He was the Son of the Most High, of God Himself (Lk. 1:32, 35). There was no question that Elizabeth was using the term "Lord" in its highest sense. She was under the power of the Holy Spirit; therefore, she was confessing the truth under the influence of God. The truth was that the coming Child of Mary was the Messiah, the Son of the living God. She was also contrasting her son with the Son of Mary. Her own son was to be great, but the Son of Mary was greater. He was *her Lord*, the Lord God Himself, the Son of the Most High.
2. Note the clear sign given to Elizabeth. The sign was unmistakable. Upon hearing the greeting of Mary as she entered the door, Elizabeth's heart leaped for joy and the baby in her womb leaped much more than usual.

In Elizabeth's words, "The baby in my womb leaped *for joy* [exultation]." God caused the baby to leap (the word is strong, indicating a struggling leap) as a sign of great joy in the presence of One so great that Elizabeth would call Him "my Lord."

Thought 1. Elizabeth's confession of her Lord was a very personal thing. She apparently never shared it with John. John did not know Jesus was the Messiah until Jesus' baptism (Jn. 1:31-34). John had to discover and confess Christ for himself. So do we all. It is a *personal* decision.

Mat 10:32 "Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven."

Mat 16:15-17 "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven."

1 John 4:15 If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God.

Thought 2. Elizabeth's confession was bound to encourage Mary.

- 1) *God sees to it that we are encouraged* when we need encouragement. Mary needed assurance, so God took her where she could be assured. But note: she obeyed God. She went where God led her. It was while she was obeying that God was able to encourage her.

Mat 10:30-31 "And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows."

Isa 41:13 For I am the LORD, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you.

Isa 43:1 But now, this is what the LORD says - he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine."

- 2) Elizabeth willingly humbled herself to help Mary. She was older and held a higher position as the wife of a priest, yet she denied and surrendered herself to push Mary and her child forward.

Acts 20:35 In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'

Rom 12:15 Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.

Rom 15:1 We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves.

Gal 6:2 Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

IV. Luke 01:45 Mary's Faith

Elizabeth proclaimed that Mary's faith would receive the promise. Note two significant points.

1. There are two reasons why Mary has been blessed by believers of every generation.
 - a. Mary believed the Word of God sent to her (Lk. 1:38). Contrast her belief with Zechariah's unbelief (Lk. 1:20).
 - b. Mary was related to Christ in a very, very special way.

Thought 1. The same two facts are essential for us if we wish to be blessed by God.

- 1) We must believe the Word of God sent to us.

Luke 11:28 He replied, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it."

John 14:23 *Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him."*

John 15:7 *"If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you."*

1 Th 2:13 *And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe.*

Mark 8:38 *"If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels."*

- 2) We must become related to Christ by adoption. We must become the adopted children of God.

Gal 4:4-6 *But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father."*

3. The result of Mary's believing the Word of God was that she was to see the performance of God's promises, the things told her from the Lord.

2 Pet 1:4 *Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.*

Deu 7:9 *Know therefore that the LORD your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commands.*

Psa 105:8 *He remembers his covenant forever, the word he commanded, for a thousand generations. ■*

MARY'S MAGNIFICENT SONG ABOUT GOD: GOD'S GLORIOUS MERCY AND DELIVERANCE LUKE 01:46-56

Introduction

Mary's song is known as the *Magnificat*. It has some similarity to the Song of Hannah (1 Sam. 2:1-10). However, there is a striking difference between the two songs. Hannah proclaimed a triumph over her enemies; Mary proclaimed God and His glorious mercy to man. Mary was proclaiming the salvation of God, a salvation wrought through the promised Messiah, her Saviour. She predicted that the Saviour would be welcomed by those who revered Him (v. 50); but He would be rejected by the proud, the powerful, and the rich (vv. 51-53).

- I. God was the subject of her song (v. 46).
- II. God was her Saviour (vv. 47-48).
- III. God was to be proclaimed (vv. 49-50).
- IV. God had reversed the order of things on earth (vv. 51-53).
- V. God had helped His people (vv. 54-55).
- VI. Conclusion: Mary visited Elizabeth for about three months (v. 56).

I. *Luke 01:46 Mary's Praise of God*

God was the subject of Mary's song. Mary was not singing about herself; she was not praising herself. She was not thinking about things which she might accomplish. She said very definitely, "My soul glorifies the Lord." The Lord was the subject of her song, the subject of her praise and rejoicing. Note two things.

- 1 Mary was bound to be tired and exhausted. She had just arrived from a long trip and had not even had time to sit down. As soon as she walked in the door, Elizabeth began her proclamation of praise under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Mary's song followed right on the heels of Elizabeth's song. Mary forgot her tiredness, for her faith was being confirmed. She now knew that the angel who had come to her was not a figment of her imagination, not an illusion, not a false vision, not some dreamy state of mind (v. 28). He was real; and his message that she, as a virgin, would bear the Son of God was true. Her faith was reassured and confirmed.

Thought 1. God assures and confirms the faith of us all. We believe and trust, and as the need arises, God steps in to confirm the reality of what we believe.

Deu 7:9 *Know therefore that the LORD your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commands.*

Thought 2. The one thing that can overcome tiredness and exhaustion is an experience with God. More than anything else, the experience of *genuine* prayer and seeking God will cause a person to forget tiredness of body. How desperately we need to seek God!

Mat 11:28 *“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”*

2. The word *glorify* (megalunei) means to declare the greatness of. The idea is habitual; that is, it was the habit of Mary's soul to glorify the Lord. She kept on glorifying Him.

Thought 1. Mary was greatly blessed by God, yet she did not slip into the sin of pride, nor did she think that she was a favourite of God. The more we are blessed by God, the more dangerous the sin of pride becomes. We must learn to live praising God more and more. The more He blesses us, the more we must learn to praise Him.

1 Pet 2:9 *But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.*

Psa 9:11 *Sing praises to the LORD, enthroned in Zion; proclaim among the nations what he has done.*

Psa 100:4 *Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.*

II. **Luke 01: 47–48 Mary's Humility**

God was Mary's Saviour. Mary said three significant things.

1. God saw her need for a Saviour. Mary recognized her need, that she was a sinner and needed a Saviour just like everyone else. And, more importantly, she made a *personal confession*: “God is my Saviour.” She was proclaiming that God saw her need and saved her.
2. God saw her low estate. Mary recognized where she had come from, just how lowly a person she was. In the eyes of the world, she was a *nobody*: *poor, obscure, unknown, insignificant, of little purpose and meaning* in life. The very expression “the humble state of his servant” suggests that Mary was even considered the least within her own household.

Thought 1. God usually chooses the least person to more clearly demonstrate His mercy and power (see Gideon, Judg. 6:15; Leah, Gen. 29:31; believers, 1 Cor. 1:26-29).

Thought 2. We must all know where we have come from, just how far down we were when God saved us (Rom. 3:23).

Rom 5:8 *But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

1 Tim 1:15 *Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners — of whom I am the worst.*

1 Pet 3:18 *For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit.*

Thought 3. No matter how *low*, how *nothing* we may be, God cares and will reach down and out to us. He will take us by the hand, lift us up, and give us purpose, meaning, and significance. God will make us somebody and use us, giving us a full and meaningful life (Jn. 10:10).

James 4:10 *Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.*

Isa 57:15 *For this is what the high and lofty One says — he who lives forever, whose name is holy: “I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.”*

3. God will cause her to be remembered. All believers will highly esteem her and her great dedication to God. But note what Christ said:

Luke 11:27-28 *As Jesus was saying these things, a woman in the crowd called out, “Blessed is the mother who gave you birth and nursed you.” He replied, “Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it.”*

III. **Luke 01:49–50** *The Attributes of God*

God was to be proclaimed. Mary proclaimed three of the glorious attributes of God.

1. Mary proclaimed God's power. Two things in particular were in her mind, two phenomenal things.
 - a. The promised Messiah was *now* to be born. The hope of the world was now to be fulfilled after so many generations of waiting. God's power was now to be demonstrated in a way never before witnessed.
 - b. The promised Messiah was to be born of a virgin. It was to be an event and a method never before witnessed. A miracle was to be performed! The enormous power of God was to be demonstrated *even in the birth of the Messiah!* As Mary testified, “the Mighty One has done great things for me.”

Luke 19:37 *When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen.*

Psa 51:15 *O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise.*

Psa 107:22 *Let them sacrifice thank offerings and tell of his works with songs of joy.*

2. Mary proclaimed God's holiness: "holy is his name"; that is, God is to be set apart as different from all others (See *Holy, Saint, Sanctification*, 1 Pet. 1:15-16). His very nature, His very being is different. God is both pure being and pure in being, both perfect being and perfect in being. God is holy in name and holy in being, set apart and different from all others.

Exo 15:11 *"Who among the gods is like you, O LORD? Who is like you — majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders?"*

Psa 99:9 *Exalt the LORD our God and worship at his holy mountain, for the LORD our God is holy.*

3. Mary proclaimed God's mercy. There were at least two thoughts in Mary's mind.
 - a. God's glorious mercy to her. He had proven to be her personal Saviour (Lk. 1:47-48).

Lam 3:22-23 *Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.*

Micah 7:18 *Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance? You do not stay angry forever but delight to show mercy.*

- b. God's glorious mercy in finally sending the Messiah (Saviour) to those who feared (reverenced) Him. Note that Mary saw God's mercy passing down from generation to generation.

Col 1:12-13 *Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves.*

1 Th 5:18 *Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*

Heb 13:15 *Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise - the fruit of lips that confess his name.*

Psa 103:17 *But from everlasting to everlasting the LORD's love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children's children.*

Psa 108:4 *For great is your love, higher than the heavens; your faithfulness reaches to the skies.*

1 PETER 01:15–16
HOLY, SAINT, SANCTIFICATION (HAGIOS)

But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy.” 1 Peter 01:15–16

All three of these words and their various forms (holiness, saints, and sanctification) are translated from one Greek word *hagios*. Its Hebrew equivalent is *kadosh*. It is difficult to translate into English although its meaning is easy to grasp. Its basic meaning is to be separated, set apart, and different. Morally, it means pure, sinless, righteous, holy. Something holy is set apart, separated, different from all other persons or things. It is something that God has set aside for Himself. Man cannot set it aside as holy. It has to be set aside by God Himself.

A study of the word *holy* shows the movement of God in history.

1. God is said to be pre-eminently and supremely holy (Lk. 1:49; Jn. 17:11; 1 Pet. 1:15). He possesses an incomparable majesty, so supremely majestic that there are beings who do nothing but surround His throne day and night singing out the praises of His holiness (Isa. 6: 1f; Rev. 4:8).
 2. Things that have a special connection to God are said to be holy. The ground upon which Moses stood when God confronted him was said to be holy (Exo. 3:1-5; Acts 7:33). The temple was said to be holy (Mt. 24:15), and the Most Holy Place in particular was holy (Heb. 9:2-3). The mount where Christ was transfigured was called holy (2 Pet. 1:18). The covenant that God made with Abraham was holy (Lk. 1:67-79). The gospel and Scriptures are called holy (Mt. 7:6; Rom. 1:2). Anything that becomes associated with God is set apart unto God in a very special sense and becomes different from other things.
 3. The Jews are called a *holy nation* (Exo. 19:6). They were set apart in a very special way to God. The Old Testament deals primarily with the Jews and their special relationship to God: “You are to be holy to me because I, the LORD, am holy, and I have set you apart from the nations to be my own.” (Lev. 20:26; cp. Dan. 7:18, 22).
- => The Jewish people were *holy* in that they were to be different from other nations, different in that they were to believe God and serve Him faithfully. God knew them in a very special way above all the nations of the earth (See *Israel, God's Special People*, Jn. 4:22; and *Jews, the Seed of Abraham*, Rom. 4:1-25).
- => The Jewish priesthood was *holy*, different from other men (Lev. 21:6). The people's tithe or tenth was *holy*, different from other money and goods and

used for different purposes (Lev. 27:30). The temple was *holy*, different from other buildings (Exo. 26:33).

But note this: the Jews refused to play the part in history that God wanted them to play. The Old Testament is a continuous record of their rejection of God's will. And when God sent His Son into the world, they committed the supreme and lasting rejection. They refused to acknowledge Him and put Him to death.

4. Jesus Christ is said to be holy in a very special way.

=> Before His birth, the angel said to Mary, "The holy One to be born will be called the Son of God" (Lk. 1:35).

=> Mary worshipped Him in song and praise before His birth saying, "Holy is His name" (Lk. 1:49f). He was the only begotten Son of God, *holy*, revered, and worthy of veneration and worship.

=> The people recognized that He was *sanctified* by God (Jn. 10:36; cp. 6:69).

=> The mentally ill and demon-possessed recognized Him as the Holy One of God (Mk. 1:24; Lk. 4:34).

=> The church worshipped Him as "the Holy Child of God" (Acts 4:27, 30).

Note this: Jesus Christ Himself was the transition from God's dealing with the Jewish nation as holy to a new people as holy. When the Jews rejected God's Son, they showed their ultimate refusal to follow God, to be holy and separated unto Him. Therefore, God had no choice but to raise up another people to be separated unto Him. The new people are those of all nations and peoples who believe and follow Christ as the Lord of their lives.

5. The church is now said to be the holy people of God. The privileges and responsibilities of following God were taken from Israel and given to the church (Jn. 17:14, 16; Rom.11:16f).

=> The church is called *a holy nation* and a *royal or holy priesthood*, a people made up of genuine believers from all nationalities and languages and races (1 Pet. 2:5, 9).

=> The church is a people who set themselves apart unto God as holy and separated and different, who utterly trust Him and abandon themselves to follow Him.

=> The church is now the dwelling place for God's presence. Believers are being built "to become a dwelling in which God lives by His Spirit" (Eph. 2:21-22). The church in some unique and spiritual sense, by an act of God, becomes the very body of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23). The church, the body of believers when meeting together locally, now replaces the temple of the Old Testament (1 Cor. 3:16).

6. But there is something even more precious and hallowed to real believers. The body of the individual believer becomes holy, for the Spirit of God dwells within the believer's body (1 Cor. 6:19-20). The body of the believer becomes the dwelling place for God's very presence, and the body replaces the holy of holies within the inner sanctuary of the temple. Thus, believers are called *saints or holy ones* (Acts 9:13, 32, 26:10; Rom. 1:7.) □

IV. Luke 01:51-53 The Sovereignty of God

God had reversed the order of things on earth. Mary proclaimed what the results of the Messiah's coming were to be. There were to be three results, and all three are given in the Greek aorist tense; that is, they are proclaimed as having already happened. Mary saw into the future, and standing there in the future, she proclaimed what the Messiah's coming had already done.

What Mary saw was that the Lord had reversed the order of things on earth. And note: He had done it with "His arm," that is, not by love but by power.

1. The Lord had scattered the proud. The proud are prideful in their thoughts, in "their inmost thoughts." They think themselves better...
 - by looks
 - by ability
 - by person
 - by heritage
 - by position
 - by achievement
 - by wealth
 - by possessions

Mary predicted that at the end of time, the Lord will have scattered all such pride. The proud will have been scattered in "their inmost thoughts."

2. The Lord had dethroned the mighty and exalted the humble. The mighty are those who sit in positions of power, authority, and influence over others. The picture concerns those who take their power and...
 - seek their own ends
 - abuse others
 - fail to serve
 - enslave others
 - deprive others
 - bypass others
 - push others down
 - misuse others

Mary predicted that at the end of time, the Lord will have dethroned the mighty and exalted them of low degree (Mt. 19:28).

3. The Lord had filled the hungry and emptied the rich. Those who were rich only in this world's goods are seen stripped of all their earthly goods and sent away empty. And those who had nothing of this world, but who put their trust in God, are seen as having received all good things (see note, Eph. 1:3).

V. *Luke 01:54-55 The Saviour of the World*

God had helped His people. Two specific helps were proclaimed.

1. God had remembered His mercy. The people (Israel) desperately needed God's mercy and God's deliverance. They were enslaved by the Romans; therefore, they were frantic in their search for deliverance, so frantic many were turning to false messiahs and other answers to escape their plight. Some were even finding their security in the Roman state and in humanistic answers instead of God. If a people ever needed God to remember His mercy, it was then. Mary proclaimed that the Lord had remembered His mercy.
2. God had remembered His promise of the Messiah. He had promised the Messiah to the fathers of Israel, to Abraham and to Abraham's seed. And note: the promise had now been fulfilled. God had sent the Messiah, the Saviour of the world. (See *Israel, God's Special People*, Jn. 4:22; and *Jews, the Seed of Abraham*, Rom. 4:1-25.)

Gal 3:16 *The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say "and to seeds," meaning many people, but "and to your seed," meaning one person, who is Christ.*

John 8:42 *Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now am here. I have not come on my own; but he sent me."*

John 10:24-29 *The Jews gathered around him, saying, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly." Jesus answered, "I did tell you, but you do not believe. The miracles I do in my Father's name speak for me, but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand."*

VI. *Luke 01: 56 The Conclusion*

Mary remained with Elizabeth for about three months, the very time that was needed to make sure she was pregnant. She needed the encouragement of Elizabeth until the fact had actually happened and was proven. Note the simple childlikeness of Mary, her need for the support and encouragement of her older sister who was probably more spiritually mature.

Rom 15:1 *We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves.*

Gal 6:2 *Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ. ■*

JOHN 04:22 ISRAEL – GOD'S SPECIAL PEOPLE

“You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews.” John 04:22

Why did Jesus Christ come to the Jewish nation and come to earth as a Jew? Very simply stated, the Jews were God's special people. They had been born by a special act of God. It all started long, long ago. God had wanted four things.

1. He wanted a people who would love Him supremely and give Him their first loyalty. (See Gen. 17:7; Isa. 43:10.)
2. He wanted a people who would witness to all other nations that He and He alone was the one true and living God. (See Gen. 12:3; 22:18; Acts 13:26, 47.)
3. He wanted a people through whom He could send the promised Seed, the Saviour and Messiah, Jesus Christ, to all men everywhere. (See Gen. 3:15; 17:7; 22:18; Gal. 3:16; Jn. 4:22.)
4. He wanted a people through whom He could send His written Word, the Holy Bible, and preserve it for all generations. (Rom. 9:4-5; 1 Pet. 2:10-12.)

In searching the earth for such a people, God could find none (Rom. 1:18-32). God could do only one thing. He had to find one man and through him raise a new people, a new nation.

1. God found and chose Abraham and through him established the Jewish nation. (Gen. 12:1-5; 13:14-17; 15:1-7; 17:1-8, 15-19; 22:16-18; 26:2-5, 24; 28:13-15; 31:13; 35:9-12.) God chose one man and challenged him to worship God supremely. If that man would worship God supremely, then God would cause a special people to be born of his seed. That man was Abraham. Abraham was the first Jew (Gen. 12:1-4; Gal. 3:16). In the Old Testament the Jews and their land (Palestine) were continually pointed to as the very special people and land of God. They were called...

=> God's treasured possession (Exo. 19:5; Deu. 7:6; 14:2; 26:18; Psa. 135:4).

=> the LORD's portion (Deu. 32:9).

=> the LORD's land (Lev. 25:23; Jer. 2:7; 16:18; Hos. 9:3).

=> the holy land (Zec. 2:12).

However, the Jewish nation failed to obey God supremely. The whole plot of the Old Testament centres around God's pleading and dealing with the Jews. Again and again, He gave the nation the opportunity to obey Him. He dealt with them in mercy and in judgment, but at every turn they refused to heed His pleading.

2. God chose the family of David. (see *Jesus Christ, King of Israel*, Jn 1:49). God had no choice but to make another move, so He chose one faithful family within the Jewish nation and gave to that family one great promise. The family was that of King David, and the promise was that of the Messiah, God's great King, God's very own Son. God's Son was to come through the line of David and establish an eternal nation of people who would love God supremely. However, the Jewish nation again failed God. They misinterpreted God's Word — the prophecies of His coming.
 - a. The Jews misinterpreted God's Word by saying the seed of Abraham included only the Jewish nation. In their minds, God had no children except the children of the Jewish nation. The Bible says explicitly that the seed of Abraham is Christ, and the special people of God are those individuals within all nations who worship God supremely (Gal. 3:16).
 - b. The Jews misinterpreted God's Word by saying that the eternal kingdom promised to David was the Jewish nation and the Jewish nation only. They expected Israel to be established as an earthly nation forever and all other nations to be subservient to Israel. But again, God's promise was not that narrow, nor was it that prejudiced. The Bible says there is not, and never has been, any respect of persons with God (Deu. 10:17; 2 Chr. 19:7; Job. 34:19; Acts 10:34; Rom. 2:11; Gal. 2:6; Eph. 6:9 ; Col. 3:25; 1 Pet. 1:17). God did say that Christ was to come from the Davidic line, but He also said that He was going to establish an eternal nation made up of people everywhere who would love God supremely (Rom. 2:28-29).

By misinterpreting God's promises, the Jews failed to be the missionaries to the world that God had chosen them to be. They became earthly bound and materialistic minded. They twisted the idea of the promised Messiah to fit their own schemes. They conceived of Him as One who was to establish an earthly kingdom for the Jewish nation alone. They failed to see that God was speaking...

 - of an eternal kingdom of righteousness.
 - of a kingdom that is of another dimension entirely — the spiritual dimension.
 - of a new heaven and a new earth that would give each person an eternal life beyond just one earthly generation.
3. God had no choice but to make a third move. This He did by sending His own Son into the world through the Jewish nation. God sent Him so that the world through Him might be saved (Jn. 3:16-19). However, man rejected God's Son and crucified Him. This act — the killing of God's Son — was the final blow. When man slew the only Son of God, the whole world *was* involved. Both Jew and Gentile were represented symbolically in the Jewish religionists and the Roman authorities.

They both actually did the plotting, sentencing, and execution. If the world were ever to be saved, it was now perfectly clear that God had to make every move Himself.

This He did once-for-all. In His eternal purpose and plan for man's salvation, God took the sins of all men and laid them upon His Son while He was being slain upon the cross. He allowed His Son to bear the sins of the world (1 Pet. 2:24). Then He took His Son and raised Him from the dead – never to die again. He did what man had always failed to do: in His Son's resurrection God began to build a lasting kingdom of righteousness, a new nation that is presently being made up of men from all earthly nations who desire and are willing to follow Jesus Christ supremely. He is calling out and forming a new people who have genuinely been born again – spiritually. These new born people shall live eternally – beyond just one earthly generation. These people are identified as His church, as a body of people who genuinely believe and follow Him. They are destined to be the inhabitants of the new heavens and earth. Believers become God's new community, new society, new race, new nation of people. They become His church, His new creation - spiritually and supernaturally born again – who comprise the true family of God (Lk. 8:21; Eph. 2:11-18; 4:17-19.)

***Eph 2:18-22** For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief corner-stone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.*

God, acting solely upon His own through the death and resurrection of His Son, has fulfilled His promises to both Abraham and David. All the people of the nations of the world now have the opportunity to become children of God, the special people of God. □

ROMANS 04:01–25
JEW, THE SEED OR OFFSPRING OF ABRAHAM; JUSTIFICATION,
RIGHTEOUSNESS, NEW CREATION

Abraham held a unique position in the Jewish nation, for he was the founder of the nation. He was the man whom God had challenged to be a witness to the other nations of the world - a witness to the only living and true God. God had appeared to Abraham and challenged him to leave his home, his friends, his employment, and his country. God made two great promises if Abraham would follow God unquestionably:

Abraham would become the father of a new nation, and all nations of the earth would be blessed by his seed or offspring (Gen. 12:1-5; 13:14-17; 15:1-7; 17:1-8, 15-19; 22:15-18; 26:2-5, 24; 28:13-15; 35:9-12).

Scripture says Abraham did as God requested. He went out not knowing where to go (Heb. 11:8). He completely and unquestionably trusted God and took God at His word.

Now note: it was not Abraham's keeping of the law that pleased God. In fact, the law had not yet been given (Gal. 3:17). What pleased God and what caused God to justify Abraham was Abraham doing as God said. Abraham simply *believed* the promise of God that God would give him a new life — *in* a new nation — *with* a new people. (See Gal. 3:8, 16; Heb. 11:8-10; 11:13-16; 11:17-19.)

Note several things.

1. Abraham and his "seed" or "offspring" were the only ones to whom God gave the promises. This is emphatically stated (Rom. 4:13-25; Gal. 3:6-16, 26, 29).
2. Only a promise was given to Abraham (Rom. 4:13-21; Gal. 3:14, 18-21, 29). No other information whatsoever was given. God did not identify the country nor tell Abraham where he was to go. Neither did God tell Abraham when his wife (Sarah) would bear the seed (the male child) from whom the promised nation would be born. God made a simple promise, and all Abraham had to go on was that simple promise, that is, the sheer Word of God.
3. Only one condition was attached to the promise. Abraham had to believe God. No works whatsoever were involved.
4. Abraham did believe God (Gen. 12:4-5; Rom. 4:3, 11-22; Gal. 3:6; Heb. 11:8f).
5. Abraham was *counted righteous* because he believed God (Rom. 4:3-5, 9-13, 19-22; Gal. 3:6; see Gen. 15:6). God did not count him righteous because of who he was or what he had done. He simply believed God. Therefore, God took his faith and *counted* his faith as righteousness (See Rom. 4:1-3; 4:22; 5:1).
6. The proof that Abraham really believed God was that he did what God had said. His faith *preceded* his obedience. He believed God and then he obeyed God. If he had not believed God, he would not have left his home or his employment. He would not have left his familiar surroundings and meaningful relationships and personal attachments. The fact that he did as God asked was evidence that he believed the promise of God.
7. The man who believes God is the man who receives the promises of God (Rom. 4:5-12, 16-17, 23-25; Gal. 3:7-9, 14, 22, 26, 29). Paul argues that neither

heritage nor nationality, neither merit nor works, neither the law nor the rules of the law have anything to do with the promises of God (Gal. 3:6-7). The true children of Abraham are those who believe God — any person of any nation. In fact, God's promise that a nation would be born to Abraham and "his seed (offspring)" was the promise of an eternal nation. This eternal nation is to be of another world, of another dimension of being: the spiritual dimension, a dimension just as real as the physical dimension. But it is to have one distinction: every citizen is to be a believer — one who has believed God and His Word. This is exactly what this passage is saying: "They who believe are the children of Abraham, the children of God's promise. They are to be blessed along with faithful Abraham. They are to be the citizens of God's Kingdom, of 'the new heavens and the new earth.'" (See Heb. 11:8-18; 2 Pet. 3:10-14.) □