

FPFWC Christian Development



Profiles in Faith

December 2023

Winter Quarter

December 23, 2023

Lesson #4 – Expectant Mothers’ Faith

SCRIPTURE TEXT – Luke 1:36-45, 56

ICE BREAKERS-

1. How does Luke 1:37 encourage your trust in God’s Word?
2. What significance do you think it had for Mary that Elizabeth knew the importance of Mary’s baby?
3. What is one action you can take in the upcoming week so that others feel blessed when they are with you?

Key Verse: “And 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 Ghost: and she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women.”—Luke 1:41–42a

LESSON BACKGROUND –

Early church tradition unanimously identified Luke, a physician and traveling companion of Paul, as the writer of the third Gospel and the book of Acts (Colossians 4:11–14). While the evidence is slim, there is a chance that Luke was the only Gentile author in the New Testament. Some scholars put the date of writing at around AD 60. This most likely occurred while Paul was imprisoned at Caesarea Maritima (as recorded in Acts 23:33; 24:27), which would have freed up Luke to interview the eyewitnesses of Jesus’ earthly ministry (Luke 1:1–3). The accuracy of the resulting research puts Luke in the company of the very best ancient Greek historians.

One of the eyewitnesses that Luke could have interviewed was Mary, the mother of Jesus. Such an interview would not be surprising, for the Gospel of Luke has more material regarding women than either of the other synoptic Gospels, Matthew and Mark. One example of this material unique to Luke’s Gospel is Jesus’ interaction with Mary and Martha in Luke 10:38–42. Another example is today’s text. As the text opens, the birth of the person who came to be known as John the Baptist has been foretold (Luke 1:5–25), as has been the birth of Jesus (1:26–35)—both by angelic visitation.

LESSON COMMENTARY

To encourage her, the angel told Mary of Elizabeth’s pregnancy (1:36) and reassured her that **nothing will be impossible with God** (1:37). Mary’s humble submission (1:38) indicates the reason she was chosen for this tremendous honor.

1:39–45. To confirm the word of the angel (cf. 1:36) Mary immediately went to visit Elizabeth (1:39–40). Upon hearing Mary’s greeting, Elizabeth and her unborn child experienced the movement of the Spirit (1:41, 44b; see comments on v. 67), prompting Elizabeth to pronounce a blessing on Mary (1:42–45). This blessing indicated that Elizabeth understood the tremendous honor that had been conferred upon Mary and the significance of her child—namely, that He was her **Lord** (1:43b), indicating that Elizabeth understood this child to be the Messiah (cf. Bock, *Luke*, 137). Elizabeth also blessed Mary for her faith in the angel’s message (1:45).

1:46–56. Mary’s response to this confirmation of the angel’s word prompted a song of praise (1:46–55) known as “*The Magnificat*” (after the first word of this song in the Latin version). The song begins with a “Word of Praise” (1:46–47), continues with the “Cause for Praise” (1:48–49a), and centers on the “Object of Praise” (1:49b–55)—namely, the **Mighty One** (1:49a), the One whose name is **holy** (1:49b)—the God of the OT covenant promises. The song itself is filled with OT allusions (e.g., compare 1:46 with 1Sm 2:1; 1:47 with Ps 35:9; 1:52 with Job 5:11; 1:55 with Gn 17:19) and praises God for His mercy (1:50; cf. Ps 103:17; 54), His power (Lk 1:51), His justice and equity (1:52–53; cf. Ps 107:9), and mostly for His covenant faithfulness (Lk 1:54–55). For Mary the greatest significance of this impending birth was that God was about to fulfill His covenant promises to **Abraham and his descendents forever** (1:55).

LESSON NUGGET – What an honor to be chosen to be the mother of the Messiah! Mary humbly submitted to the Lord because she had faith that He would keep His promise. Her decision would bring her sorrow and suffering, but she willingly yielded it. She was “blessed among women” because of the grace of God given to her (Luke 1:28, 30). All who trust Christ as their Savior are highly graced by the Lord (Ephesians 1:6).

Sources: Moody Bible Commentary, Standard Lesson Commentary, and The Essential Everyday Bible Commentary