

**Exegetical Notes, Luke 1:39-45**  
**“Mary Visits Elizabeth”**

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**Luke 1:39-45**

**Background: Mary, the mother of Jesus, had just received good news. Though she was just an unmarried girl, perhaps only 14 years old, she had just received word that she would be the mother of the Messiah. This was certainly good news. However, Mary’s circumstances may have prevented it from being received as such. But not in Mary’s case. Her response to God was, “I am the Lord’s servant, may it be done to me as you have said.”**

**Verse 39-40**

*At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, where she entered Zechariah’s home and greeted Elizabeth.*

- Mary was an unmarried girl who had just discovered that she was pregnant. Undoubtedly there would have been the usual whisperings behind her back, finger pointing, false accusations, raised eyebrows, embarrassing questions, gossip, criticism, family pressures, and crude jokes. But for Mary, if Joseph, the man to whom she was engaged, refused to acknowledge the child as his, and it was not his, she could be stoned to death according to Jewish law for her sin. Therefore, she could not safely remain in Nazareth, her hometown. As quickly as possible she left home because of her “circumstances.”
- She went to the home of Zechariah and Elizabeth. See Luke 1:5-25. These folks were the parents of John the Baptist and close relatives of Mary.

**Verse 41**

*When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.*

- The baby that was in Elizabeth’s womb was John the Baptist.

- In those days, before the Day of Pentecost (See Acts 2), the Holy Spirit did not “abide” with believers as he now does. He visited particular individuals at special times. At the moment when Mary first spoke to Elizabeth, he visited Elizabeth.

### **Verse 42-45**

***In a loud voice she exclaimed: “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to 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 what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished!”***

- When the Holy Spirit comes into a person’s life, be it for a visit or a long-time stay, there is always some manifestation of his presence. Frequently, this manifestation is in speech. The Holy Spirit causes the people he comes to, to proclaim some good news. That is the case with Elizabeth. Her speech is a spiritual proclamation.
- Additionally, the Holy Spirit leads her into truth. There is no way for Elizabeth to know that Mary is even pregnant let alone carrying Israel’s Messiah in her womb. Yet she instantly knows these things because the Holy Spirit reveals them to her.
- Even the baby, as yet nothing more than a fetus, is capable of being moved by the Holy Spirit for when the Holy Spirit came upon his mother at the time of Mary’s first words to her, the baby leaped for joy.
- Legally two witnesses were necessary to confirm any evidence. Here there are two witnesses, Elizabeth and, the as yet unborn, John.
- Elizabeth’s words become confirmation to Mary that she has indeed heard and understood God. Elizabeth calls Mary “blessed.” It means happy or favored. And the reason that Mary is blessed is that she has believed God.

(These exegetical notes are the foundational study for the sermon entitled *Mary Visits Elizabeth*. They have been prepared by the Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen, Senior Pastor at Cornerstone Fellowship, Coatesville Pennsylvania. All rights are reserved by Dr. Jensen and *Cornerstone Fellowship*.)