

Luke 1:39-56

New Revised Standard Version	New American Standard Bible	Authorized (King James) Version
<p>³⁹In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, ⁴⁰where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit ⁴²and exclaimed with a loud cry, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. ⁴³And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? ⁴⁴For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.”</p>	<p>³⁹Now at this time Mary arose and went in a hurry to the hill country, to a city of Judah, ⁴⁰and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴²And she cried out with a loud voice and said, “Blessed <i>are</i> you among women, and blessed <i>is</i> the fruit of your womb! ⁴³And how has it <i>happened</i> to me, that the mother of my Lord would come to me? ⁴⁴For behold, when the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby leaped in my womb for joy. ⁴⁵And blessed <i>is</i> she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what had been spoken to her by the Lord.”</p>	<p>³⁹And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Juda; ⁴⁰and entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth. ⁴¹And 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: ⁴²and she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed <i>art</i> thou among women, and blessed <i>is</i> the fruit of thy womb. ⁴³And whence <i>is</i> this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. ⁴⁵And blessed <i>is</i> she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord.</p>
<p>⁴⁶ And Mary said, ⁴⁷ “My soul magnifies the Lord, ⁴⁸ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, ⁴⁸ for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; ⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. ⁵⁰ His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. ⁵¹ He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. ⁵²He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly;</p>	<p>⁴⁶ And Mary said: “⁴⁷My soul exalts the Lord, ⁴⁷ And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. ⁴⁸ “For He has had regard for the humble state of His bonds slave; For behold, from this time on all generations will count me blessed. ⁴⁹ “For the Mighty One has done great things for me; And holy is His name. ⁵⁰ “And His mercy is upon generation after generation Toward those who fear Him. ⁵¹ “He has done mighty deeds with His arm; He has scattered <i>those who were</i> proud in the thoughts of their heart. ⁵² “He has brought down rulers from <i>their</i> thrones,</p>	<p>⁴⁶ And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, ⁴⁷ and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. ⁴⁸ For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. ⁴⁹ For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy <i>is</i> his name. ⁵⁰ And his mercy <i>is</i> on them that fear him from generation to generation. ⁵¹ He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. ⁵² He hath put down the mighty from <i>their</i> seats, and exalted them of low degree. ⁵³ He hath filled the hungry with good things;</p>

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⁵³ he has filled the hungry with good things,
and sent the rich away empty.
⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
⁵⁵ according to the promise he made to our
ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”
⁵⁶ And Mary remained with her about three
months and then returned to her home.

And has exalted those who were humble.
⁵³ “He has filled the hungry with good things;
And sent away the rich empty-handed.
⁵⁴ “He has given help to Israel His servant,
In remembrance of His mercy,
⁵⁵ As He spoke to our fathers,
To Abraham and his descendants forever.”
⁵⁶ And Mary stayed with her about three months,
and *then* returned to her home.

and the rich he hath sent empty away.
⁵⁴ He hath holpen his servant Israel,
in remembrance of *his* mercy;
⁵⁵ as he spake to our fathers,
to Abraham, and to his seed forever.
⁵⁶ And Mary abode with her about three months,
and returned to her own house.

1. Verse 39-40: Where did Mary go? When? In what manner? Why?
2. Thinking back to Luke 1:9, Elizabeth’s husband Zechariah is described as doing his priestly duties at the altar of incense in the sanctuary where he encounters Gabriel, is dumbstruck, and, in verse 23, returned to his home. Thinking of these earlier passages, in what city or town do you think Elizabeth and Zechariah lived? In verses 39-40, where does Mary go to meet Elizabeth? Is there a discrepancy between the earlier verses and these later ones? Why or why not?
3. Verses 41-45: What two things happen to Elizabeth when she meets Mary? How do these events change Elizabeth? What does she say to Mary that evidences this change?
4. Verse 45: When Elizabeth says, “blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord,” to whom do you think the pronoun “she” refers? In what ways does this refer to Mary? In what ways can this also refer to Elizabeth?
5. Do you think Mary is pregnant before she visits Elizabeth? If so, why did Mary visit Elizabeth? If not, why did Mary visit Elizabeth? Whatever your opinion, what does this say about human nature? (Note that in English, the present simple tense can refer to something that is always true or to something that is currently true. In verse 42, “blessed is the fruit of your womb,” can mean the baby currently in her womb or any baby Mary might bear is blessed.)
6. Verses 46-55: What does Mary say? How are verses 46-49 different from verses 50-55? What literary style does Mary’s response echo? Why would Luke choose this style of writing?
7. What is the subject of the opening phrases of verses 46 and 47 do toward the object? Who is the object of these phrases? What has the object done toward the subject in verses 48 and 49? What does this circle of cause and effect say about Mary’s relationship to God? In what ways might your relationship with God be similar? Different?
8. How do verses 50-55 move beyond Mary? How do these verses bring Mary into the broad sweep of Jewish history? What do these verses say about Mary’s understanding of her place in the broad sweep of history?
9. Consider each verse. How might each one apply to Mary? Similarly, how might each one apply to you? How can these verses draw you into the sweep of history?
10. Verse 56: How long did Mary stay with Elizabeth? Keeping in mind that Luke’s sense of history is not as linear as modern Western history, what event might have happened to Elizabeth shortly before or after Mary left? If you were Mary, what might you be thinking or feeling as you left?