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## The Blessed Virgin Mary – Luke 1:26-56

**Introduction** – She was just a young woman, very young, living in an obscure town in Galilee, and she was betrothed to a man who was of the house of David. This lowly girl has become the most famous woman in all of history. Why was she so blessed? The right answer to this question is critical, for the wrong answer has brought much trouble to the church.

**The Context of Parallel Stories** – Luke is carefully and purposefully repeating himself. “*she (he) was troubled,*” “*the angel said to her,*” “*Do not be afraid,*” “*you will...bring forth a son,*” “*and shall call his name,*” “*He will be great,*” “*said to the angel,*” “*the angel answered and said,*” “*Now indeed (but behold),*” are phrases that frame both stories.

**Points of Contrast** – These are just as important to note. Elizabeth had a need – she is childless and disgraced. Mary has no apparent need (and may have faced disgrace later). The story of John is taking place publicly and around the temple. The story of Jesus is taking place privately and in Nazareth, but it is to this One that God will give the everlasting throne, house and kingdom. The younger son, the more obscure birth, the lesser will become the greater.

**The Virgin** (vv 26-38) – Mary, a virgin, was betrothed to Joseph (a practice where, after a formal engagement and exchange of the bridal price, the woman lived at home with her father for about a year until the wedding). Gabriel arrives and declares, “*blessed are you among women,*” as will Elizabeth (v42). She is “*highly favored*” and is not to fear for she has “*found favor with God,*” but the reason for this favor is at first not mentioned.

Mary is told that she will conceive in her womb (Jesus is really her son), and that His name will be Y’shua (Yahweh is salvation), and He will fulfill what Solomon only fulfilled in part (vv 32-33, see 2 Sam 7:12-17).

Mary wonders how this can be, for she does not know a man. The answer Gabriel gives is that the special presence of the Holy Spirit will overshadow her (Gen 1:2 comes to mind) and this glory will bring forth what would be considered impossible (as at creation).

Mary’s response is another direct contrast to the previous story of Zacharias. She has the last word and it is a word of faith and humble obedience. Mary unreservedly embraces the purpose of God for her life, without regard to its cost to her personally. This is a beautiful response and example of how all of Israel (true children of Abraham) ought to respond to God’s favor.

**The Blessed Virgin** (vv39-45) – Normally, a young betrothed virgin of Mary’s age would not travel alone to another city.

Speculation: *Mary and her family went to see Elizabeth, and through this her family came to believe Mary’s story.* For immediately upon seeing Mary, the Holy Spirit comes upon Elizabeth and she “*shouted at the top of her voice.*” And why is Mary “*blessed among women?*” “*Blessed is she who believed that there shall be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord. – (v45 my translation)*” Mary believed the impossible. Mary believed God’s Word. Mary had faith in future grace that was to be hers and all of believing Israel. “*Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*” (Heb 11:1). And faith brings forth a song -

**The Song of the Virgin: The Magnificat** (vv46-55) – Luke is not interested merely in events, but especially in their meaning. And there is far more meaning in this song than we have time to consider. Just a few glorious points -

**Mary is a Sinner** – “*my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior*” (v47). Mary is the blessed virgin and she is our saint. She is blessed because of what God did for her (v49) and holy is His name (not hers). She is not a co-redeemer. She did not remain a virgin forever. She is not the mediator through whom we approach Jesus. She cannot receive the prayers of millions of people in a moment. She is not to be worshipped. She died and, outside of faith in her Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, she would have been lost in her sins – just like you and me. But she is a blessed saint who composed a glorious song that should be sung and embraced and meditated upon.

**Gospel Song** - It is personal and can be applied, by faith, personally (vv46-50). It is earthy and declares the expectation of the gospel upon the oppressed here – it is not simply to be spiritualized ‘up there’ (vv51-55). And yet it is not a call to revolution, for the song is all about what God has done, is doing, and will do.

**Covenant-Making/Covenant-Keeping God** – This is a song sung by one who is waiting with great faith upon a God who promises future grace. The one who sings this song believes that God is one who acts in history out of his on self-giving nature to embrace men and women in relationship. God remembers and acts (vv 54-55). This is why Jesus has come.

**Sola Fide** – The story of the blessed virgin is for you, God’s people. It is the story for those who have faith and nothing else

to offer God. Believe this: God is going to fulfill all that He has promised He will do. And these things were written that you might come to know the certainty of all God has promised – in other words, that your faith might be strengthened. God does great things through those who entrust the journey with Him to His care. Those are the ones who reply, “*let it be to me according to your word.*” Mary reflects the proper response of anyone who has been called by God with no credentials other than availability and a responsive heart.

**The Glory of the Holy Spirit rests upon His People Now** – From Pentecost on, the Holy Spirit rests upon His church, and as we gather in holy convocation, the Holy Spirit overshadows us again and again. And fruit is born. Sinners are declared saints, the barren bear fruit, the hungry are filled, the hopeless and destitute become heirs of the world, and the kingdom of God becomes ours. Jesus comes to destitute, disgraceful and despised places, and transforms everything. Even the song of praise that bursts from my heart and mouth is a gift from Him.

*Dave Hatcher – September 18, 2005*