

The Gospel According to

SAINT MATTHEW

SAINT MARK

SAINT LUKE

SAINT JOHN

NOTHING RECORDED	NOTHING RECORDED	CHAPTER 1, VERSES 39-56	NOTHING RECORDED
		<p>1:39 - And Mary¹ arose in those days², and went into the hill country³ with haste⁴, into a city of Juda⁵;</p> <p>1:40 - And entered⁶ into the house⁷ of Zacharias⁸, and saluted⁹ Elisabeth¹⁰.</p> <p>1:41 - And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth¹⁰ heard the salutation⁹ of Mary¹, the babe¹¹ leaped¹² in her womb¹³; and Elisabeth¹⁰ was filled¹⁴ with the Holy Ghost¹⁵:</p> <p>1:42 - And she spake out¹⁶ with a loud¹⁷ voice¹⁸, and said, Blessed¹⁹ art thou among women²⁰, and blessed¹⁹ is the fruit²¹ of thy womb¹³.</p> <p>1:43 - And whence²² is this to me, that the mother of my Lord²³ should come to me?</p> <p>1:44 - For, lo²⁴, as soon as the voice¹⁸ of thy salutation⁹ sounded²⁵ in mine ears²⁶, the babe¹¹ leaped¹² in my womb¹³ for joy²⁷.</p> <p>1:45 - And blessed¹⁹ is she that believed²⁸: for there shall be a performance²⁹ of those things which were told her from the Lord.</p> <p>1:46 - And Mary¹ said, My soul³⁰ doth magnify³¹ the Lord,</p> <p>1:47 - And my spirit³² hath rejoiced³³ in God³⁴ my³⁵ Saviour³⁶.</p> <p>1:48 - For he hath regarded the low³⁷ estate³⁸ of his handmaiden³⁹: for, behold, from henceforth all generations⁴⁰ shall call me blessed¹⁹.</p> <p>1:49 - For he that is mighty⁴¹ hath done to me great things⁴²; and holy⁴³ is his name⁴⁴.</p> <p>1:50 - And his mercy⁴⁵ is on them that fear⁴⁶ him from generation⁴⁰ to generation⁴⁰.</p> <p>1:51 - He hath shewed⁴⁷ strength⁴⁸ with his arm⁴⁹; he hath scattered⁵⁰ the proud⁵¹ in the imagination⁵² of their hearts⁵³.</p> <p>1:52 - He hath put down the mighty⁴¹ from their seats⁵⁴, and exalted⁵⁵ them of low³⁷ degree⁵⁶.</p> <p>1:53 - He hath filled the hungry⁵⁷ with good things⁵⁸; and the rich⁵⁹ he hath sent empty⁶⁰ away⁶¹.</p> <p>1:54 - He hath holpen⁶² his servant⁶³ Israel⁶⁴, in remembrance⁶⁵ of his mercy⁴⁵;</p> <p>1:55 - As he spake to our fathers⁶⁶, to Abraham⁶⁷, and to his seed⁶⁸ for ever⁶⁹.</p> <p>1:56 - And Mary¹ abode⁷⁰ with her about three months⁷¹, and returned to her own house⁷.</p>	

CHRONOLOGY: From late June/early July 5BCE thru October 5BCE*, approximately 3 Months

* The established year for this chapter is based on the year of Jesus' birth, which is highly debated. Below is a list of possible years for Jesus' birth. The chronology of Jesus' life in this book is based on the author's belief that Jesus was born in 4BCE. The most likely years for Jesus' birth are 1BCE, 4BCE and 5BCE. The other years are problematic.

- Year theories:
- 1 BCE - Supported by **the Apostle James E. Talmage** & Secular Biblical Scholars Pearson and Hug & the creator of Gregorian Calendar: Dionysius Exiguus.
 - 2 BCE - Supported by Secular Biblical Scholar Scallinger.
 - 2/3 BCE - Supported by early Christian writers and historians Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Africanus, Hippolytus of Rome, Hippolytus of Thebes, Origen, Eusebius and Epiphanius.
 - 3 BCE - Supported by Secular Biblical Scholars Baronius and Paulus.
 - 4 BCE** - Supported by Secular Biblical Scholars Bengel, Wieseler & Greswell. **Supported by this Author.**
 - 5 BCE - Supported by **the Apostle Bruce R. McConkie**, **the Apostle J. Rueben Clark**, and Secular Biblical Scholars Usher and Petavius.
 - 6 BCE - Supported by Secular Biblical Scholars Strong, Luvin and Clark.
 - 7 BCE - Supported by Secular Biblical Scholars Ideler and Sanclemente.

LOCATION: Judaea (Hebron, Bethlehem, or near vicinity), legend says Ein Karem

COMMENTARY: Elisabeth was Mary's cousin. Their mother's, Anna and Sobe, are said to be sisters. Once Gabriel told Mary that she would have the Son of the Almighty, he told her to visit her cousin who live some 90 miles away. It is suspected that Gabriel did this to protect Mary. Surely a young woman who became pregnant prior to the completion of the betrothal process would be shunned at the very least, and possibly stoned. When she arrived, Elisabeth's unborn baby recognized Mary and the baby she was carrying. The unborn John leaped in side of her, seeming bearing testimony of the promised Messiah. The greeting between the two cousins was joyous. Mary praised God. Her words have come to be known as the "Magnificant". Mary stayed with Elisabeth for about 3 months. It appears that she left just prior to the birth of John the Baptist, which would be odd. Close female relatives and friends assisted in child birth. Someday we might know these details.

FOOTNOTES:

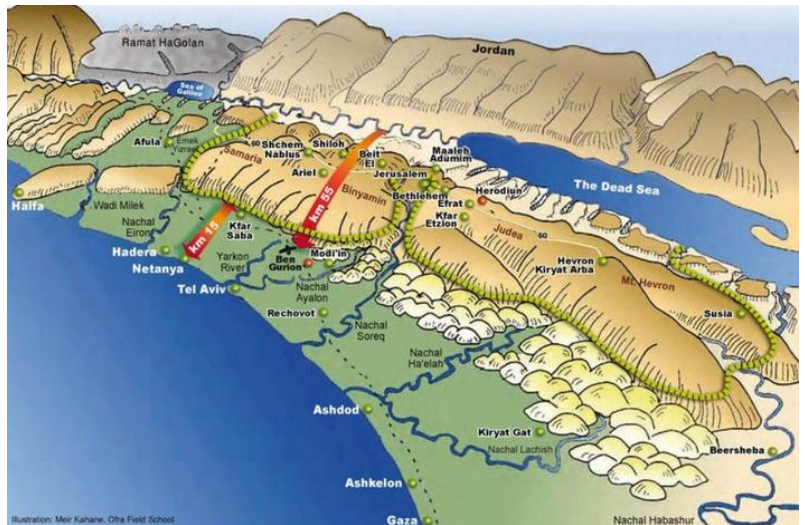
1- **Mary** - The name "Mary" is the Latin equivalent of the Hebrew name "Miriam". Our modern New Testament is translated from Greek. The Greek records her name as "Μαρία" or "Maria". The original Hebrew name means "their rebellion", which has little meaning to Mary, the Mother of Jesus, who has little association with any rebellion. In fact, she was a righteous young maiden who submitted the Lord's will with no apparent objection or concern.

In Mary, we see that the blessings of the Lord are not always considered blessing of the world. What was a divine blessing, being pregnant with the Son of God, would be perceived as sin among men. They would judge her, ridicule her, and possibly end her life over this great blessing. And yet, she willingly submitted to the will of the Lord.

2- **arose in those days** - The term "in those days" is a literal translation, but the Greek phrase "ἐν ταῦταις ἡμέραις" carries the idea of "about the same time". To understand the use of this phrase, one must remember that the angel Gabriel had just commanded Mary to leave and visit Elisabeth, so the fact that "about the same time" that Mary received her heavenly visitor, she left. When do you follow a commandment? Right now! That is exactly how Mary responded. About the same time, she left. That would place her departure around July the second (late June/Early July).

3- **hill country** - Literally, "into the hilly". There were two areas in the country of Judaea that have reference to "the hill country". There is the "hill country of Benjamin" and "the Hill country of Judaea". The City of Jerusalem was nestled on top of mount Moriah between the two. Several valleys surrounded Jerusalem coming together to divide the hill country of Benjamin on the north and the hill country of Judaea on the south. The hill country to the south was home to Hebron, the city of Abraham. It also contained the city of Bethlehem, known as King David's home town. To the east of the hill country of Judaea lied the Judean wilderness. This wilderness was more like a barren wasteland that divided the Hill country of Judaea from the Dead Sea. To the west was the plains of Philistine.

Life in the hill country was tough. The terrain was hilly and very rocky. It is a common joke to say that Judean sheep eat rocks. They graze in the rocky hill country eating small pieces of foliage from between the countless rocks. From a distance it often looks like they are eating rocks. Hebrew myth says that when God formed the earth he took a large bag of rocks, and from that bag He formed the mountain ranges of the earth. When He was done, His bag was left with gravel. He emptied his bag in the hill country of Judaea.



Because of the poor conditions in the hill country, farming was very difficult and took years of preparation. With all the rocks there was little, to no, top soil, which was necessary to grow crops. Farmers took rocks to form terraces down the sides of the hills. They then let nature take its course. Years of rain and wind would allow top soil to gather on the tops of the terraces. It took seven years or more for enough top soil to gather to begin farming. Even then, there were limited crops to grow under such conditions. Living in the hill country very challenging.



TO THE LEFT IS A PICTURE TAKEN AT EIN KAREM, A CITY JUST SOUTH EAST OF JERUSALEM. IF YOU LOOK CLOSELY YOU CAN SEE THE MULTIPLE LEVELS OF TERRACES USED FOR FARMING. EIN KAREM, OR SIN KAREM AS IT IS SOMETIMES SPELT, IS THE LEGENDARY HOME OF ELISABETH AND ZACHERIAS AND THE BIRTH PLACE OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.

There are some very significant symbols intertwined in the fact that the Savior of mankind was to be born in the hill country of Judea. Our lives are symbolically full of rocks. They are full of sin, which hinders the spirit, and faith, or any good thing from growing within us. It was to this end that Jesus was born. It is Him, and only Him, that is capable of removing our rocks.

Despite its poor conditions, the hill country of Judea was birthplace of Father Abraham and symbolized the promised land and heavenly promises to his children. It was also the birthplace of David, and symbolized the royalty of the House of Israel. Both these symbols are vital to the fulfillment of prophecy regarding the promised Messiah. Jesus was a descendant of Abraham and of the lineage of David. It is fitting that Mary would start her pregnancy with a visit to the hill country of Judea.

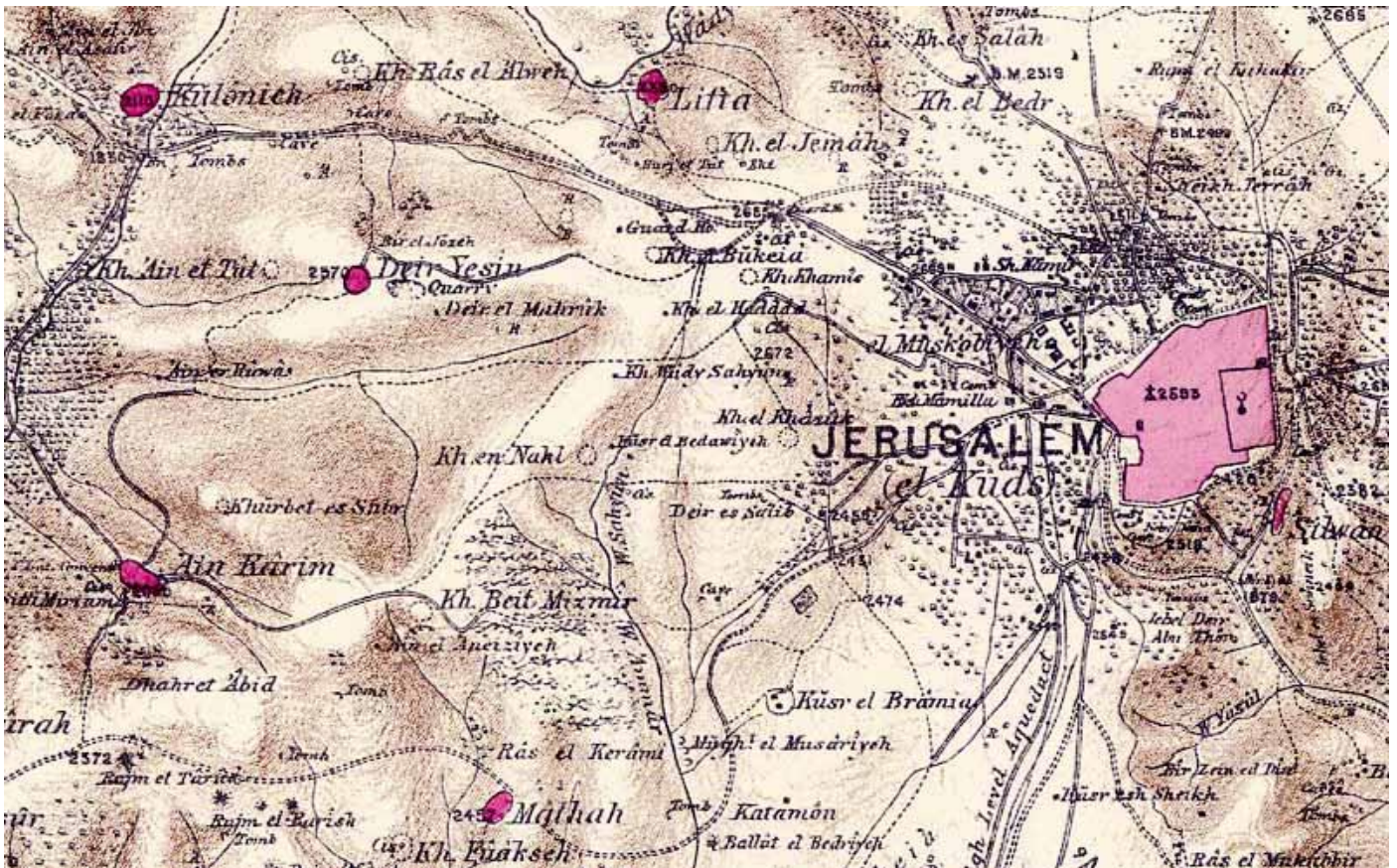
To the left, are the remains of an ancient farm of Ein Karem. If one looks careful, the watch tower is present, of course that is a story for another chapter. Ein Karem is about 5 miles or 8 kilometers from Jerusalem. A map of the area



surrounding Jerusalem is shown below. So, where does the tradition that Zacharias and Elisabeth lived in Ein Karem come from? **"A Christian tradition, well antedating the Crusades, eventually localized the dwelling of Zacharias in Ein Karem."** (The Gospel According to Luke I-IX, Anchor-Yale Bible, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, page 363). The fact that the tradition originates in the 8th century makes it highly questionable. Even so, it is as good of a guess as Hebron or anywhere else.

The name Ein Karem means "the Spring of the Vineyards". The site was originally a Canaanite site of the bronze age. It was built around the spring in the valley. This spring has since been called "Mary's spring", and it is said that Elisabeth greeted Mary at this spring when she came to visit.

During the Israelite period, Ein Kerem was within the region of the tribe of Judah. It may have been called Beth-Hakerem, or "house of the vineyard". The Bible implies that it is close to Jerusalem, since a fire sign was used on the top of the Kerem hill to signal the approach of an enemy. **"O ye children of Benjamin, gather yourselves to flee out of the midst of Jerusalem, and blow the trumpet in Tekoa, and set up a sign of fire in Bethhaccerem: for evil appeareth out of the north, and great destruction"**. (Jeremiah 6:1).



- 4- **haste** - The word "haste" if translated from the Greek word "σπουδή" or "spoudē". One definition of the word is indeed haste or with haste. The word haste, in English, means great speed, especially in situations where time is limited. Another definition of the word is earnestness and diligence. It makes total sense that Mary left in haste. We know from footnote #2 of this chapter, that Mary left "at about the same time" that she received that commandment to leave. Her obedience would logically be described as haste. Whether in "haste" or with "earnestness" we do not know. **"However, it should not, in either case, be used to analyze Mary's psychology; it suggests merely the proper reaction to the heavenly sign that has just been given."** (The Gospel According to Luke I-IX, Anchor-Yale Bible, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, page 362).

- 5- **Juda** - The word "Juda" appears to be a form of the name "Judah". "Luke actually refers to 'Judah' (Iouda) in the indeclinable Greek form that reflects the Hebrew *Yehūdāh*." (The Gospel According to Luke I-IX, Anchor-Yale Bible, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, page 362). It most likely makes reference to the southern portion of Israel. It would differentiate from Galilee to the far north and Samaria to the immediate north. For more information, see footnote #4 of Chapter 2.
- 6- **entered** - Though there does not appear to be a set order or protocol of events when entering someone's house, there were definitely accepted customs. They included a greeting accompanied by bowing. Guests were offered water, anointing oil and the removal of their shoes. They may have their feet washed and kisses were often exchanged. The following may give the reader an idea of what it looked like to enter someone's home.

Anointing a Guest Proper hospitality offered a guest an anointing of the head with oil. The custom of anointing guests with oil is an ancient one among nations of the East. Olive oil alone was often used, but sometimes it was mixed with spices. A guest was often sun weathered by the dry climate of the Middle East. Oil was used to nourish the dry leathery skin of a guest. This was a sign of hospitality and compassion. Not offering a guest anointing oil would have been a sign of disrespect.

Bowing to a Guest When a guest is received into an Oriental home, bowing between the guests and host is quite apt to take place. In Western lands such bowing would be of the head only, but in the East there is a more expressive custom of saluting with the head erect and the body a little inclined forward, by raising the hand to the heart, mouth, and forehead. The symbolic meaning of this action is to say something like this: "My heart, my voice, my brain are all at your service." But those who are used to this custom on many occasions enter into a more complete bow. They do not wait to do this only for royalty, but when they want to express thanks for a favor, or supplicate for a favor, and at many other times of meeting they often fall on their knees, and then incline the body touching the ground with their head, and kissing the lower part of the other person's clothing, or his feet, or even the dust at his feet. To those not acquainted with such manners, it would seem that one person was worshiping the other like he would worship GOD; but ordinarily, worship of this sort is not involved in the action.



Eating Alone is inhospitable Part of Oriental etiquette is to want to share hospitality with others. After a meal has been prepared, an Arab has been heard to call out three times from a high spot in the neighborhood, inviting men to come and partake of the meal. These men of the desert do not like to eat their meal alone.

Giving Water to Guests The guest is given a drink of water. One of the first things done for a guest who has been received, is to offer him a drink of water. Doing this is recognizing him of being worthy of peaceful reception. Thus, to give a drink of water is the simplest way to pledge friendship with a person.

Greeting a Guest Upon entering an Arabian house or a Bedouin tent, the greetings used are something like this: The host will say: "Salam alakum" which means, "Peace be on you." The guest will respond with the words: "Wa alakum es-salam," meaning, "And on you, peace."

Guest Departure When the time comes for a guest to depart, a Arabian host will do his best to delay the departure. He will beg him to stay for one more meal, or to wait until the morrow before he leaves. In Judges nineteen is the finest example in the Bible of this custom of delaying the guest. The host said to the guest: "Comfort thine heart with a morsel of bread, and afterward go your way." After the meal he urged him, "Tarry all night." The next day the guest was persuaded to tarry until afternoon. But when urged to stay over another night, the guest decided it was time to insist on departing, which he did. This is typical Oriental procedure (Judges 19:5-10). When a guest departs, the usual salutation is as follows. The guest will say: "With your permission." And the host will make answer, "Depart in peace." When a host desires to do special honor to his departing guest, he will walk with him out of the town a distance. Sometimes this walk will last for an hour, and will come to an end only after the guest has urged his host that he need not go any farther.



Hospitality Among Nomads Among tent-dwellers; if a guest is entertained by one who lives in a tent, there is no separate place provided, nor would it be expected. Usually, the first section of tent within the entrance is the regular guest apartment, which serves as dining room and sleeping quarters. The men eat with their guest and sleep with him.

Kissing a Guest Guests in Holy Land homes expect to be kissed as they enter. The kiss was traditionally given on each cheek.

Making a Guest Lord of the House The guest made lord of the house. An Eastern proverb reads: "The guest while in the house is its lord." This is a true statement of the spirit of the hospitality of the East. One of the first greetings a Palestinian host will give his guest is to say, "Hadtha beitak" i.e., "This is your house." This saying is repeated many times. Thus actually the guest during his stay is master of the house. And whenever the guest asks a favor, in granting it the host will say, "You do me honor." There must have been the same attitude between host and guest in the days of Lot. The host was considered to be a servant, and the guest was lord.

Removing a Guests Shoes Upon entering a house to be entertained, a guest does as all Orientals would do, he takes off his boots, shoes, or slippers before entering a room. This becomes necessary since they sit on a mat rug, or divan, with their feet beneath them, and shoes would soil the couch and the clothes: and would also make a very uncomfortable seat. The idea of defilement from the shoes led to the custom of removing the shoes upon entering sacred places.

Washing a Guests Feet After bowing, greeting, and kissing, the Eastern guest is offered water for washing his feet. Wearing of sandals would naturally necessitate foot washing, but it is often done when shoes have been worn. A servant will assist the guest by pouring the water upon his feet over a copper basin, rubbing the feet with his hands, and wiping them with a napkin.

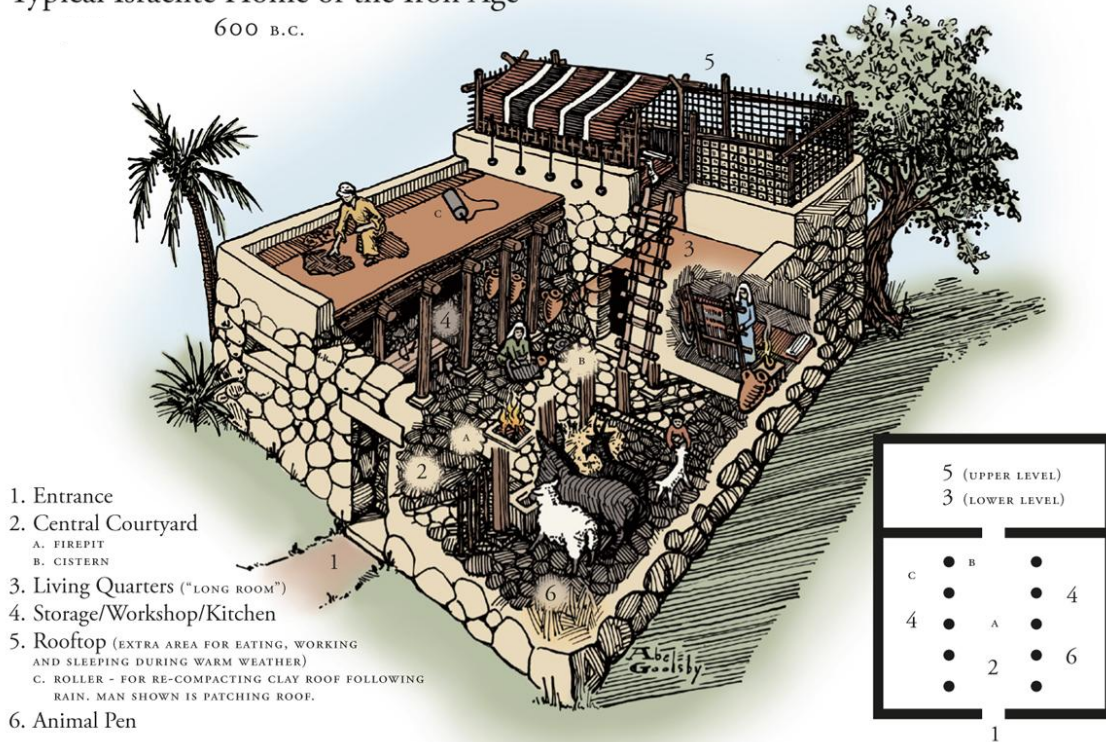
Hospitality to Friends In the East, a friend is always welcome to receive hospitality.

The Romans of New Testament times had a token of hospitality between two friends, which consisted of a tile of wood or stone, which was divided in half. Each person wrote his name on one of the two pieces, and then exchanged that piece with the other person. These were often kept and handed down from father to son. To produce the counterpart of one of these pieces would guarantee the hospitality of a real friend.

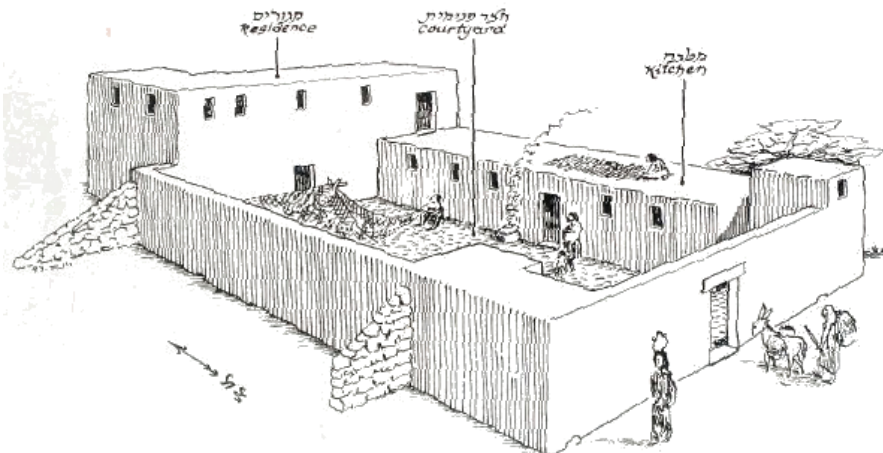
7- House - The houses of the time were diverse, probably for the same reason our modern homes are; cost, materials, lifestyle, occupation, and personal preference. Most Jews of the time had earthen houses, often using the abundant stone of the area. Southern Judea, and especially the city of Jerusalem, are abundant in a beautiful limestone fittingly called "Jerusalem Stone". Most houses used this stone for their walls. Additionally, houses had flat roofs made of clay and straw. It was very common for houses to have an upper room on the roof. Even if you didn't have an upper room, you would surely have access to the roof and utilize a portion of it for regular use. In the summer, people would sleep on the roof to stay cool and it just counted as another part of their house. Because this was so common, it was against Jewish law not to have a railing or lattice work around the roof for safety. If a house fell down and killed someone, the builder of the house was tracked down and stoned to death for his bad craftsmanship. Below are two examples of Jewish homes of the time. The first one would be indicative of a home in the "hill country", while the second would represent a home built on a lake or fishing region.

Typical Israelite Home of the Iron Age

600 B.C.



FISHERMAN'S HOUSE



Larger cities typically had outer walls for protection against invasion. Villages typically lacked such security. "The style and size of private dwellings in Israelite walled cities varied based on available space, construction materials, and the relative importance of the inhabitants." (Manners and Customs in the Bible, Victor H. Matthews, page 113). The main difference between houses in the cities and the villages were primarily space related. Due to restrictions of the wall, houses in the cities were typically closer together, occupied less space, and often plagued with access via narrow streets. The villages had larger spaces between houses and easier access.



There were also difference between a house for the rich and one for the poor. "...there was a clearly defined distinction between the poorer areas and those of the elite. This latter area was usually on the western edge of the mound where the prevailing west wind would cool the houses and carry away cooking and human odors. The houses in this area were much larger and better built, generally showing additions and repairs made over the long periods of time they were occupied. Like those in the villages they were pillared structures with stone foundations and few window openings. There was more use of tolled stone, however, in the walls, including square-stoned corners. The central courtyard contained the oven and cooking storage jars and served as a gathering area for the family and its friends. The entrance to these dwellings usually led into an alleyway, and there were stairs on the outside of the house leading up to the second story. If the house was built next to the city wall, these stairs were built against the wall. An economy of materials can be seen in the construction of the doorways at the end of the wall so that only one doorjamb was required. The ceiling consisted of log beams thatched over with several layers of a clay and straw mixture. Sanitary conditions within these homes continued to be unhealthy. Poor ventilation, the odor and gases arising from decaying food and waste matter, and the heat both contributed to the growth of bacteria and the spread of disease. Frankincense and other sweet-smelling aromatics were burned in small incense stands in these homes." (Manners and Customs in the Bible, Victor H. Matthews, pages 113-114).

8 - **Zacharias** - See footnote #6 in Chapter 2.

9 - **Saluted** - This was another word for "Greeting". The word "saluted" comes from the Greek word "ἀσπάζομαι" or "aspazomai". It literally means to bring someone unto one's self. It translates as to salute, greet, bid welcome, or to wish sell. **"Luke does not tell us what the greeting was or how it was phrased."** (The Gospel According to Luke I-IX, Anchor-Yale Bible, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, page 363). The Jews would typically greet using words like "Shaloom" or "Peace". It might include phrases like "peace be unto you" or "Peace be on you."

10 - **Elisabeth** - See footnote #12 in Chapter 2.

11 - **babe** - The word babe is derived from the Greek word "βρέφος" or "brepheos". It means an unborn child, an embryo, or a fetus. In an secondary use of the word it can be used for a new born child, an infant or a babe.

12 - **leaped** - The Greek word from which "leap" is derived means exactly what is translated as "to leap". This small, seemingly insignificant verse, brings to question a topic of significant issue. Many have questioned when a spirit joins with the fetus, becoming a living soul. Some would argue that the spirit enters the body at the moment of birth. They speculate that when the baby takes its first breath, it joins with the spirit. The fact that Elisabeth's baby leaped at the presence of Mary, seemingly recognizing the mother of the Son of God, would support that the spirit enters the body long before birth. Elder Bruce R. McConkie stated, **"In this miraculous event the pattern is seen which a spirit follows in passing from his pre-existent first estate into mortality. The spirit enters the body at the time of quickening, months prior to the actual normal birth. The value and comfort attending a knowledge of this eternal truth is seen in connection with stillborn children. Since the spirit entered the body before birth, stillborn children will be resurrected and righteous parents shall enjoy their association in immortal glory."** (Mormon Doctrine, Bruce R. McConkie, page 768).



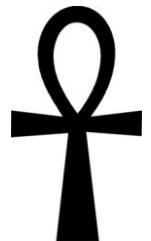
There seems to be no revealed doctrine as to when the "quickening" takes place. It would appear that quickening takes places months prior to birth. Perhaps when the baby starts to make it's first movements. So then how does one explain the fact that the Savior announced to the Nephites that he would be born on the morrow? **"The Book of Mormon account of Christ speaking to Nephi the grandson of Helaman and saying, 'On the morrow come I into the world' (3rd Nephi 1:13), is not intended to infer that the spirit does not enter the body until the moment of the actual birth. Rather this revelation to the Nephites was itself being conveyed in a miraculous and unusual way. Quite probably the one uttering the words was speaking in the first person as though he were Christ, in accordance with the law enabling other to act and speak for Deity on the principal of divine investiture of authority."** (Mormon Doctrine, Bruce R. McConkie, page 122).

13 - **womb** - The "womb" is a symbol of birth and rebirth. It represents countless possibilities (An Illustrated Encyclopedia of Traditional Symbols, J.C. Cooper, page 194). Elisabeth was indeed carrying within her countless possibilities. Her unborn son, John, would prepare the way for the Savior of mankind. Therein lies the possibilities. With the Savior's infinite sacrifice, mankind could overcome all things. Sin was no longer an immovable barrier. We need not fail. Our potential is endless.

Birth gave us the gift of mortality. We gained physical bodies, a step towards being like our Heavenly Father. Even so, birth alone left us with several unsolved problems. Physical and Spiritual death were inevitable. Jesus solved the problem of physical death with his resurrection. He broke the bands of death, and gave eternal life to all mankind. It was free to us; however, the gift was anything but free. It cost the purest, most precious blood that ever lived on this planet. Jesus gave His life, so that we might live again. Truly, by His grace we are saved.

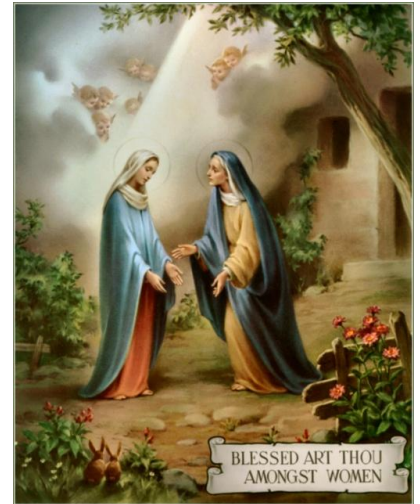
Spiritual death was overcome by Jesus' atonement. He literally paid the price of our sins, heartaches, disappointments, illnesses, and grief. Unlike His gift of eternal life, not everyone will receive the gift of overcoming spiritual death. Not that Jesus' gift was inadequate, but rather it is a gift that we must choose to partake of. In order to partake of this gift, we must be re-born. Spiritually, we must repent, and enter covenants binding ourselves to the gift of the atonement. Our rebirth, paves the way for exaltation.

The womb and birth are thus associated with life and eternal life. The Egyptians used a common symbol in their funeral texts called the Ankh. Also known as the Key of Life. The Ankh takes the shape of a cross with a loop on top, resembling a key. In the ancient language of Egyptians, the "ankh" meant "life". It is considered one of the earliest and most popular hieroglyphic symbols from ancient Egypt. It is said that the loop on the ankh symbolized the feminine or the womb, while the cross symbolized the masculine. When the two are put together, life is formed. Many believe that the Ankh is also a symbol for water and air, which are life-giving elements. Because of this, many water vessels were formed in the shape of an Ankh. When used in funeral texts it symbolizes eternal life and resurrection.



14 - **filled** - The term "filled" carries the idea of being totally consumed. One might be filled with grief, or sorrow. One could also be filled with joy, or happiness. Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost. Her entire being could feel its influence. Such filling brings revelation, knowledge and peace. **"The 'filling' of Elisabeth is the source of her inspiration. Because of it she understands Mary's condition."** (The Gospel According to Luke I-IX, Anchor-Yale Bible, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, page 363).

- 15 - **Holy Ghost** - The Holy Ghost has been discussed in Chapter 2, footnote #30, Chapter 3, footnote #38 and Chapter 4, footnote #12. In order for us to see clearly the mind and will of God, we must have the influence of the Holy Ghost. It is clear that the Holy Ghost plays a vital role in our progression. Without the Holy Ghost, we would be lost in the whims of mankind. We need the Lord to reveal Himself to us, and this is done through and by the Holy Ghost. Elder Bednar said, "Revelation is communication from God to His children on the earth and one of the great blessings associated with the gift and constant companionship of the Holy Ghost. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught, "The Holy Ghost is a revelator," and "no man can receive the Holy Ghost without receiving revelations" (Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith [2007], 132)." (General Conference, "The Spirit of Revelation, Elder David A. Bednar, April 2011).
- 16 - **spake out** - The term or phrase "spake out" is translated from the Greek word "ἀναφωνέω" or "anaphōneō". It translates as "to cry out with a loud voice; exclaim". "Literally 'with a great cry.'" (The Gospel According to Luke I-IX, Anchor-Yale Bible, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, page 364). Elisabeth was excited, and joyful at the sight of Mary.
- 17 - **Loud** - The term "loud" is derived from the Greek word "μέγας" or "megas". Oddly enough, loud is not a common translation for this Greek word. It is translated into words like "Great, Large, Abundant, Old, powerful, grand". It could be that the translators looked at the fact that Elisabeth spoke in a great or powerful voice, and supposed that meant that she was loud. Whatever the case, she was definitely not timid in her welcome to Mary.
- 18 - **Voice** - The word "voice", as used in reference to Elisabeth welcoming Mary, probably has little to no symbolic meaning. She simply voiced her feelings. Even so, it is interesting to note that the Hebrew word voice has very significant symbolic meaning. The term is often used in scripture with terms like "the voice of the Lord". The Hebrew word for voice is;



קוּל "lok" – Phonetic "qōl", English "voice"

The Paleo Hebrew letters were hieroglyphical in nature. Meaning that they were pictures as well as letters. Their pictures were often used to disclose a hidden meaning. The Hebrew word for voice can be broken down into the following message;

ק – koph – The Shepherds Crook - mercy
 ו – vav – covenant, nail
 ל – lamed – The Flail - justice

The voice of the Lord is the fulfillment of the terms of Justice, as well as the needs of Mercy. Both fulfilled by covenant. A covenant made and sealed by the nails placed through the hands, feet, and wrists of Savior.

- 19 - **Blessed** - The term "blessed" is derived from the Greek word "εὐλογέω" or "eulogēō". It means "to praise", "to invoke blessings", "to consecrate a thing with solemn prayer", "to be prospered by God", or "to be favored of God". It often carries the idea of receiving something from God, for which might have been beyond one's reach, control or ability. Mary was called "blessed among women". "Used in the positive degree along with a prepositional phrase en gynaixin, 'among women', it is a Semitic way of expressing the superlative, 'most blest'" (The Gospel According to Luke I-IX, Anchor-Yale Bible, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, page 364).

This verse in Luke Chapter 1 is thought to be fulfillment of a passage in Psalms that reads, "His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed." (Psalms 72:17). In Jesus shall all Nations be blessed. Consequently, Mary was blessed among all women to bear and rise Him, even the Son of God. "Such an understanding, however, in no way condones or mitigates the unscriptural practice whereunder Mary and graven images of her are worshipped and prayers are offered to her in the false hope that she will intercede with her Son on behalf of those who so pray." (Doctrinal New Testament Commentary, Bruce R. McConkie, page 95). In fact, the Lord offers blessings, beyond our capacity to understand, to any who follow him. So then, it makes sense that though Mary was most blest, blessings are not reserved for Mary alone. Each of us can lay claim to His rich blessings. In a dialog between the Savior and a certain woman we read, "And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked. But he said, Yea rather, **blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.**" (Luke 11:27-28).

- 20 - **woman** - The term "woman" symbolizes virtues and vices. It can also represent protection, nourishing, reproduction, and that which compliments a man. (An Illustrated Encyclopedia of Traditional Symbols, J.C. Cooper, page 194). Both Mary and Elisabeth were chosen because of their virtue and obedience. They were humble women, strengthened by their faith. They were examples to us.

This might be an appropriate time to introduce an apocryphal work that records the events of the visit of Mary to Elisabeth. It must be remembered that Apocryphal works have value to our study, but must be read with the spirit so as to weed out the influence of man.

Apocryphal Writing: "(Chapter 9, Verse 18) ¶ And when she had wrought her purple, she carried it to the high-priest, and the high-priest blessed her, saying, Mary, the Lord God hath magnified thy name, and thou shalt be blessed in all the ages of the world. (19) Then Mary, filled with joy, went away to her cousin Elizabeth, and knocked at the door. (20) Which when Elizabeth heard, she ran and opened to her, and blessed her, and said, Whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come unto me? (21) For lo! as soon as the voice of thy salutation reached my ears, that which is in me leaped and blessed thee. (22) But Mary, being ignorant of all those mysterious things which the archangel Gabriel had spoken to her, lifted up her eyes to heaven, and said, Lord! What am I, that all the generations of the earth should call me blessed? (23) But perceiving herself daily to grow big, and being afraid, she went home, and hid herself from the children of Israel; and was fourteen years old when all these things happened." (Protoevangelium or the Gospel of James the Lesser 9:18-23).

- 21 - **fruit** - The term "fruit" symbolized "immortality", "the best of that which is sacrificed", "fertility", and "blessings from heaven". (An Illustrated Encyclopedia of Traditional Symbols, J.C. Cooper, page 72). Our children are blessings from heaven. They are the best of God's creations. And somehow, in His gracious trust in our potential, He has given us temporary stewardship over His children. Mary was humbled by this fact. She understood the significance of this opportunity. Interestingly, Mary ties her blessing to the fruit, or the child, she would bring forth. "An Old Testament phrase is used here (see Genesis 30:2; Lamentations 2:20; Deuteronomy 7:13; Deuteronomy 28:4) to convey to the reader that Mary's conception has already taken place." (The Gospel According to Luke I-IX, Anchor-Yale Bible, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, page 364).

- 22 - **whence** - The term "whence" is an old English term not commonly used in modern speech. It is translated from the Greek word "πόθεν" or "pothen". It has the following defined uses;

- I. of place: from where, from what condition
- II. of origin or source: from what author or giver
- III. of cause: how is that?, how can that be?

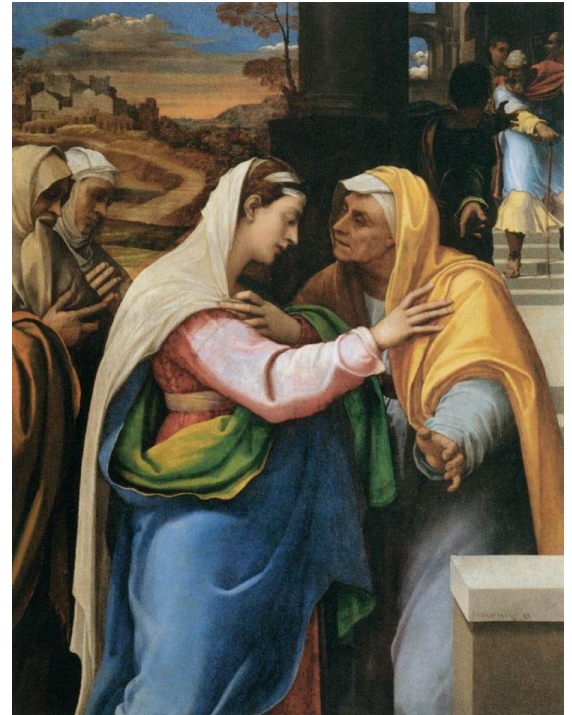
23 - my Lord - The word "Lord" comes from the Greek word "κύριος" or "kyrios". The root of the Greek word "kyrios" comes from the Greek word "kuros" meaning supremacy. The word "kyrios" is a title given to the Messiah and God. It is often translated as Master, or Lord.

24 - lo - The word "lo" is translated from the Greek word "ἴδου" or "idou". It means behold, see, or lo. Our English word lo means "look!". It is used to draw attention to something.

25 - sounded - The word "sounded" comes from the Greek word "γίνομαι" or "ginomai". It does not mean sounded. It means to become, to arise, or to be made. There does not seem to be a change in message by using the term sounded. The greet did "arise" to Mary's ears. A greeting of joy.

26 - ears - The "ears" symbolize the breath of life, probably because the ears could hear the unseen breath of life. Ears also symbolize reproduction and are somehow related symbolically to the womb. (An Illustrated Encyclopedia of Traditional Symbols, J.C. Cooper, page 58-59). It is through the ears that ideas are conceived, and knowledge is born. Unfortunately, the Savior said to worldly me **"Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember?"** (Mark 8:18) Hearing with our ears, in a spiritual manner required us to be in tune with heaven. It is evident that the spirit abounded, as both Mary and Elisabeth issued prophecy and praise of Heaven.

27 - joy - The unborn John leaped for joy as he recognized the mother of the Son of God. Joy seemed to abound in this meeting. The words of Nephi come to mind when he said, **"...men are, that they might have joy."** (2nd Nephi 2:25). So here is the point to consider; Mary was a virgin, betrothed to a man, with whom she had not finalized the marriage. She was told that she would conceive and carry as son, who would not be of her betrothed. The penalty for pregnancy prior to marriage was death. More so, she would likely be victim of scorn, mocking, and surely she would be judged and shunned. Most finding themselves in such a circumstance would be scared, and fearful. Some would be angry that their life circumstances were now complicated with tribulation beyond their control. Some may feel this way even after accepting the circumstances. I dare say, some would be angry with God for giving them such a plight. How then did Mary find joy in her new challenge. Though we speak of the infant John showing signs of joy, Mary definitely showed her own joy. Not knowing the outcome, Mary found joy in her plight. Much can be learned from Mary. She found joy through faith in the almighty. And, like it always does, it worked out. God took care of his chosen servant, just like He does for us.



28 - believed - The word "believed" is translated from the Greek word "πιστεύω" or "pisteuō". It means "to think to be true", "to be persuaded of", "to credit", or "place confidence in". Sounds a lot like faith. Mary believed, and therefore she was up to the task at hand. With faith all things are possible to us.

29 - performance - The word "performance" is derived from the Greek word "τελείωσις" or "teleiōsis". The word means a completing, or a perfecting. Her faith gave her a surety that the assignment given her would be perfectly completed. There appears to be little to no doubt in her mind. Not only did she see herself fulfilling her mission, but she saw the fulness of it.

30 - My soul - **"My Soul" is a Hebrew surrogate for I (see Genesis 27:4,25; Psalms 34:3); in literary parallelism with 'my spirit,'** (The Gospel According to Luke I-IX, Anchor-Yale Bible, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, page 366). It is also the start of Mary's response to Elisabeth's greeting. **"While the Holy Ghost rested upon her, Mary responded to Elizabeth's inspired salutation by uttering the memorable words since adopted as part of the musical ritual of many churches under the Latin name, the Magnificat"** (Doctrinal New testament Commentary, Bruce R. McConkie, page 87).

The magnificat

"My soul doth magnify the Lord, And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name. And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation. He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away. He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy; As he spake to our fathers to Abraham, and to his seed for ever."

31 - magnified - The term "magnify" is translated from the Greek word "μεγαλύνω" or "megalynō". It is an significant word in relation to God's work. It means to make great, to enlarge, or magnify. President Hinckley, speaking of the magnifying of the Priesthood, taught, **"That word magnify is interesting. As I interpret it, it means to enlarge, to make more clear, to bring closer, and to strengthen. I have here a pair of binoculars. I treasure them not only for their practical value, but also for sentimental reasons. They are useful in enlarging objects at which I might look.... All of you, of course, are familiar with binoculars. When you put the lenses to your eyes and focus them, you magnify and in effect bring closer all within your field of vision. But if you turn them around and look through the other end, you diminish and make more distant that which you see. So it is with our actions as holders of the priesthood. When we live up to our high and holy calling, when we show love for God through service to fellowmen, when we use our strength and talents to build faith and spread truth, we magnify our priesthood. When, on the other hand, we live lives of selfishness, when we indulge in sin, when we set our sights only on the things of the world rather than on the things of God, we diminish our priesthood."** (General Conference, "Magnify you Calling", Gordon B. Hinckley, April 1989).

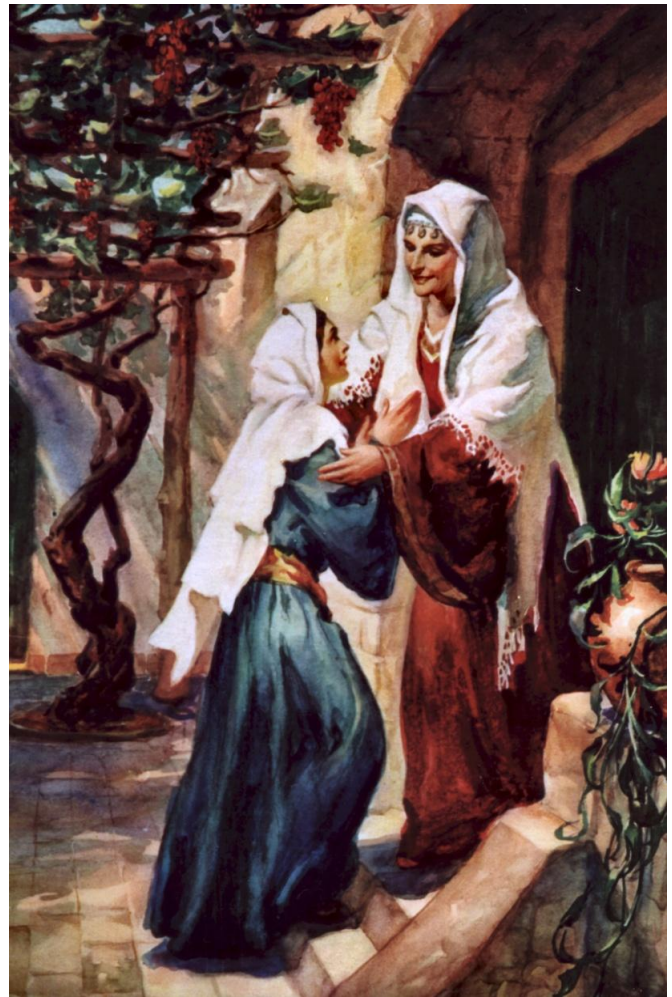
The Lord uses the word "magnify" as he directs His works. To Joshua he said, **"...This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee."** (Joshua 3:7). Isaiah records, **"The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness' sake; he will magnify the law, and make it honourable."** (Isaiah 42:21). In a letter to the Philippians, Paul taught, **"According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death."** (Philippians 1:20). The Lord magnifies all His work. He magnifies His servants, his Law, and you and I as we are obedient. Though we might consider ourselves insignificant in the grand scheme of things, the Lord does not view things that way. **"...I will magnify my name upon all those who receive and abide in my law."** (Doctrine and Covenants 132:64). In fact, He will magnify our efforts and enlarge aspect of our lives. Nephi learned this lesson as he served in his office. He said, **"... Wherefore, my soul delighteth to prophesy concerning him, for I have seen his day, and my heart doth magnify his holy name."** (2nd Nephi 25:13).

So how does one magnify the calls we are issued? "If we are to magnify our callings, we cannot live only unto ourselves. As we serve with diligence, as we teach with faith and testimony, as we lift and strengthen and build convictions of righteousness in those whose lives we touch, we magnify our priesthood. To live only unto ourselves, on the other hand, to serve grudgingly, to give less than our best effort to our duty, diminishes our priesthood just as looking through the wrong lenses of binoculars reduces the image and makes more distant the object." (General Conference, "Magnify you Calling", Gordon B. Hinckley, April 1989). President Monson put it this way, "And how does one magnify a calling? Simply by performing the service that pertains to it" ("Priesthood Power," Liahona, Thomas S. Monson, Jan. 2000, 60; Ensign, Nov. 1999, 51). "We magnify our calling when we walk with honesty and integrity. We shrink it when we stoop to devious acts and selfishness, disregarding the interests and well-being of others as we spend all of our time to accumulate that which we cannot take with us from this life to the next." (General Conference, "Magnify you Calling", Gordon B. Hinckley, April 1989).

Knowing that God is omnipotent, is not enough, if we fail to magnify our calling and receive the blessings of His great knowledge. Additionally, our failure to act hinders us but not God. God's work will not be hindered by our poor use of agency. However, we are His children and He had our interest in mind. Our failure to magnify our calls is detrimental to us, but he constantly beckons us to engage in His work. Oliver Cowdery was promised incredible blessing if he would remain faithful and magnify his call. In other words, his blessings were predicated on his ability to magnify his calling. Speaking of Oliver Cowdery, and his fall from the Church, Gordon B. Hinckley said, "But he turned and began to look through the wrong end of the lens. He found fault. He complained. His calling shrank, he diminished his priesthood, he distanced himself from those in authority in the Church... So long as he magnified his calling, he was magnified. When he diminished that calling, he shrank to oblivion and poverty." (General Conference, "Magnify you Calling", Gordon B. Hinckley, April 1989) The answer is simple; listen to the Lord as He beckons and magnify that which is asked..

Magnifying a calling, magnifies the person who is offering up his or her diligence. "Magnificent and moving is the promise to every man and boy who magnifies his calling as a holder of the priesthood. Said the Lord concerning you, they are to be 'sanctified by the Spirit unto the renewing of their bodies. They become the sons of Moses and of Aaron and the seed of Abraham, and the church and kingdom, and the elect of God.' (D&C 84:33-34.)" (General Conference, "Magnify you Calling", Gordon B. Hinckley, April 1989).

Though each of our circumstances may differ, it is important for us to give all that we can. The Lord has seldom required individuals to give all, but it is important for Him to know that we would and could do it, if asked (see Bruce R. McConkie, "Obedience, Consecration, and Sacrifice," Ensign, May 1975, 50).



- 32 - **my spirit** - "My Soul" is a Hebrew surrogate for I (see Genesis 27:4,25; Psalms 34:3); in literary parallelism with 'my spirit;" (The Gospel According to Luke I-IX, Anchor-Yale Bible, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, page 366).
- 33 - **rejoiced** - The term "rejoiced" is translated from the Greek word "ἀγαλλιάω" or "agalliaō". It means "to exult", "rejoice exceedingly", or "be exceedingly glad". It is beyond rejoicing. "Truly happy is that man or woman, or that people, who enjoys the privileges of the Gospel of the Son of God, and who know how to appreciate his blessings." (Discourses of Brigham Young, sel. John A. Widtsoe, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1941, pp. 235-36). It would be a wonderful word if everyone could enjoy these blessings, and hence have feeling of rejoicing wherever they go. Unfortunately, there are those that live contrary to the joy that is offered us all. "A second group who do not find joy are distracted by magnifying small areas of imperfection so as to drive out happiness. Some have allowed their own perceptions of imperfection to cloud the reality of their lives. An objective outsider observing them would conclude that they should be joyful. But they do not feel to rejoice. They are like the couple who have been invited to visit a beautiful garden. Instead of celebrating the visual feast, they see only the few wilted flowers and weeds and the relatively small areas which are not beautiful to behold. They do not feel the garden meets their expectations. In like manner, they are unduly critical of themselves and of others. They have become accustomed to exaggerating small imperfections and underestimating great blessings and have lost the capacity to rejoice." (General Conference, Rejoice!, Quentin L. Cook, October 1996). "That having been said, the Resurrection and Atonement wrought by the Savior and the promise of eternal life with our loved ones are of such overwhelming significance that to not rejoice would demonstrate a lack of understanding of the Savior's gift." (General Conference, Rejoice!, Quentin L. Cook, October 1996).
- 34 - **God** - The word "God" used here is a Generic form of the word, more akin to the word Deity. The Greek word is "θεός" or "theos". It translates as "god".
- 35 - **my** - Interesting that Mary, who some would deify, refers to the Savior using the very personal term "my". "Christ is the Savior of all men including Mary. Christ 'the Lord is God, and besides him there is no Savior' (D. & C. 76:1)" (Doctrinal New Testament Commentary, Bruce R. McConkie, page 87).
- 36 - **Savior** - The word "savior" is translated from the Greek word "σωτήρ" or "sōtēr". It means a saviour, deliverer, or preserver. "The name was given by the ancients to deities, esp. tutelary deities, to princes, kings, and in general to men who had conferred signal benefits upon their country, and in more degenerate days by the way of flattery to personages of influence.(Wigram) The word soter was a common Greek epithet for the gods (e.g., Zeus, Apollo, and Hermes), active personalities in world affairs (e.g., Epicurus) and rulers (e.g., Ptolemy Philopator, and later Roman Emperors). (cf. LSJ and BDAG)" ([http:// www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong=G4990&t=KJV](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong=G4990&t=KJV))
- 37 - **low** - See footnote #38 of this chapter.

38 - Estate - The word "estate" is actually derived from a Greek word that translates into a phrase rather than a word. It translates as "low estate", rather than just estate. It comes from the Greek word "ταπεινότης" or "tapeinōsis". It is pronounced "tä-pä-nō-sēs". The phrase seems rather odd, "low estate". It was a term used as a metaphor. The metaphorical meaning refers to "spiritual abasement, leading one to perceive and lament ones moral littleness and guilt." It is like saying, I am unworthy, and in a fallen state. It is definitely a statement of humility. Mary is considered to be a choice soul, so how can it be that she calls herself unworthy. Perhaps Ezekiel's words regarding pride fit here. He said, **"Thus saith the Lord God; Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high."** (Ezekiel 21:26). Mary was great in the sight of God, because of her humility. In spite of her worthiness, she recognized her dependence on redeeming grace. The Book of Mormon teaches, **"And if men come unto me I will show unto them their weakness. I give unto men weakness that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them."** (Ether 12:27)

Being of low estate can be a spiritual status or a physical status. Mary classifies herself as a handmaiden of the Lord. She obviously considers herself spiritually wanting and willing to submit to the Lord. But was Mary poor in physical terms? The answer to this question is yes. After Jesus was born she was required to offer sacrifice at the temple. She did so using two turtle doves, the offering of the poor.

39 - handmaiden - A "handmaiden" is a female slave, or a bondmaid. It comes from a Greek root word meaning to tie, bind, capture or ensnare. It conveys a lack of freedom or bondage. So how could Mary consider herself to be a handmaiden? There is no indication that the word has any literal implication. Yet, when Gabriel called her to be the mother of the Son of God, **"...Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her."** (Luke 1:38). Hannah expressed similar views about herself while speaking of her unborn son, **"And she vowed a vow, and said, O Lord of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head."** (1st Samuel 1:11). Mary's expression of a "handmaiden" was used to convey a feeling. **"It expresses her unworthiness to be the mother of the Davidic Messiah and the Son of God. Because of it she can declare that Yahweh is great."** (The Gospel According to Luke I-IX, Anchor-Yale Bible, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, page 367).



"La Visitation"
By Philippe de Champaigne (1602–1674)

In a prophecy regarding the last days, the Lord uses the term "handmaiden" in reference to His humble servants. Joel states, **"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit."** (Joel 2:28-29).

40 - generations - The word "generations" comes from the Greek word "γενεά" or "genea".

- I. fathered, birth, nativity
- II. that which has been begotten, men of the same stock, a family
 - A. the several ranks of natural descent, the successive members of a genealogy
 - B. metaph. a group of men very like each other in endowments, pursuits, character
 - i. esp. in a bad sense, a perverse nation
- III. the whole multitude of men living at the same time
- IV. an age (i.e. the time ordinarily occupied by each successive generation), a space of 30 - 33 years

President Joseph F. Smith observed once that **"great causes are not won in a single generation"** (Gospel Doctrine, 5th ed. [1939], 119). Our faithful service is often not seen by way of results for many years.

41 - mighty - The word "mighty" comes from the Greek word "δυνατός" or "dynatos". It has several uses;

- I. able, powerful, mighty, strong
 - A. mighty in wealth and influence
 - B. strong in soul
 - i. to bear calamities and trials with fortitude and patience
 - ii. strong in Christian virtue
- II. to be able (to do something)
 - A. mighty, excelling in something
 - B. having power for something

"Literally, it runs, 'for the Mighty One' (ho dynatos), a title used for Yahweh in the Septuigent of Zephaniah 3:17; Psalms 89:9" (The Gospel According to Luke I-IX, Anchor-Yale Bible, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, page 367).

42 - great things - Again, we have a Greek word that translates into an English phrase. The Greek word is "μεγαλειος" or "megaleios". It means a little more than one might think. The translators of the Bible translated it as great things, however, it carries a idea of magnificent, excellent, splendid, or wonderful.

43 - holy - The word "holy" is translated from the Greek word "ἅγιος" or "hagios". It means a most holy thing, or a saint. It is something or someone that is to be revered, or worthy of veneration. It is believed that Mary is referring to, or quoting from Psalms 99, which reads, **"Let them praise thy great and terrible name; for it is holy."** (Psalms 99:3). There are several passages in scripture that refer to the name of God as "Holy". Isaiah said, **"For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."** (Isaiah 57:15). God is Holy. His Name is Holy. Everything He does is Holy. The Book of Mormon records, **"And the angel said unto me he is a holy man; wherefore I know he is a holy man because it was said by an angel of God."** (Alma 10:9).

The word "holy" is defined as something sacred, or relating to deity. One can be holy by devoting one's self to sacred things, or consecrating one's self to religious purposes. To do such, one must first differentiate between the holy and the unholy. The Law of Moses clarifies, **"And that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean;"** (Leviticus 10:10). It goes on to direct those that want to follow God to rid themselves of all things not pertaining to Him. **"For I am the Lord your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy: neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth."** (Leviticus 11:44). To be Holy, one must not only rid one's self of impure actions, but every matter that is not like unto God. Peter the Apostle taught, **"But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy. And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear:"** (1st Peter 1:15-17).



Understanding that which is Holy requires a devotion to learning the things that pertain to Heaven. One cannot be Holy and at the same time be ignorant to God's ways. The Book of Proverbs states, **"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding."** (Proverbs 9:10). Joseph Smith said that it is not possible to have faith in God until one has a correct understanding of who God is. We cannot believe in something we do not understand. Similarly, we cannot emulate something that is unclear to our mind.

Even after much study, effort, and desire, being Holy like God seems to be a lofty goal. It often feels beyond our mortal reach. Even our most noble efforts are wrought with failures, stumbles, and errors. It can feel depressing at times to try so hard, and yet seemingly progress so little. We must remember that our efforts to do what is right, to become holy, qualifies us for divine help. The Lord stated in the Doctrine and Covenants, **"And in this place let them lift up their voice and declare my word with loud voices, without wrath or doubting, lifting up holy hands upon them. For I am able to make you holy, and your sins are forgiven you."** (Doctrine & Covenants 60:7). Becoming Holy might very well be beyond our capability, but it is not beyond Jesus'. He is capable, if we are willing, to make us Holy like unto Him. No wonder His name is called Holy. No wonder, His Father's name is called Holy.

44 - name - So what is in a name? Society associates much in one's name. It represents one's reputation. It reflects past actions, attitudes, and behaviors. It also reflects the reputation of those that bore your name before you. Each of us has an individual name. That reputation is ours and ours alone. Similarly, we have family names. Our family name might bring pride, or shame to our minds. Even so, our family name can be greatly improved or soiled by our actions. A good name, according to the Old Testament proverb is greater than the riches of the earth. **"A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold."** (Proverbs 22:1). God gives us the perfect example of what to do with our name. **"He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend is his name."** (Psalms 111:9). He redeemed! He sacrificed for others. Such is the example for us to follow. We should establish a name of service. We should use our name to save those in need of saving.

To Moses, the almighty stated, **"Behold, I am God; Man of Holiness is my name; Man of Counsel is my name; and Endless and Eternal is my name, also."** (Moses 7:35). Similarly, Mary testifies that Holy is His name. **"Or 'whose name is the Holy One'. Psalm 111:9 is reflected here. The Holiness of God is explained in Isaiah 57:15 in terms of his exaltation; he 'inhabits eternity' and is 'exalted' (mārôm), though he dwells with the lowly. As such, he is the source of the bounty manifested to Mary."** (The Gospel According to Luke I-IX, Anchor-Yale Bible, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, page 368). Mary testifies that she, being humble, has taken upon her his name and all the blessings that flow from Him. We too can partake of that same gift, and it is done by taking upon us His name. King Benjamin taught his people in Book of Mormon times: **"I would that ye should take upon you the name of Christ, all you that have entered into the covenant with God that ye should be obedient unto the end of your lives. ...And I would that ye should remember also, that this is the name that I said I should give unto you that never should be blotted out, except it be through transgression; therefore, take heed that ye do not transgress, that the name be not blotted out of your hearts"** (Mosiah 5:8, 11).

When a man wanted to claim his place as a priest in ancient Israel, he was required to have a genealogical search performed to validate that he was indeed of a priestly family. He was required to show that both his Father and Mother had priestly pedigrees. He was also required to show his own personal worthiness which included an evaluation of his physical condition. He was required to be blemish free. In other words, he was to be free of physical defects, and abnormalities. The candidate was presented before the Sanhedrin in the Chamber of Hewn stone. If the candidate was qualified, they dressed him in white and accepted him as a priest. If he was found unworthy or unqualified, the Sanhedrin would stand and turn their back to the candidate. The candidates "Name" would be blotted out of the Temple records, and he was escorted out never to return.

45 - Mercy - The word "mercy", as used in this footnote is translated from the Greek work "ἔλεος" or "eleos". It has several defined usages, as follows;

- I. mercy: kindness or good will towards the miserable and the afflicted, joined with a desire to help them
 - A. of men towards men: to exercise the virtue of mercy, show one's self merciful
 - B. of God towards men: in general providence; the mercy and clemency of God in providing and offering to men salvation by Christ
 - C. the mercy of Christ, whereby at his return to judgment he will bless true Christians with eternal life

"The phraseology of this verse is derived from Psalms 103:17." (The Gospel According to Luke I-IX, Anchor-Yale Bible, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, page 368); which reads, **"But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children;"** (Psalms 103:17).

Unfortunately, the dictionary definition of mercy leaves much to be desired in Gospel content. The mercy of the Savior is far more than kindness. Clemency is closer, but fails to capture the extent of his ability to forgive. The fact that He offers salvation or eternal life is on track, but leaves something to be desired. Not only are we saved. Not only do we gain eternal life through Him, but we are given opportunity for exaltation. His divine mercy allows us, sinners of various degrees, to repent and qualify ourselves to inherit all that the Father has. This is the Mercy of Jesus. He has met the demands of Justice, and if we choose to follow him, we reap the blessings of His mercy. Such mercy is unlike any mercy we can define on earth. Elder McConkie said, **"Deity gives mercy to the righteous, those who believe in the Son an repent of their sins; all others are subject not to the beneficent peace of mercy, but to the harsh penalties of justice (Doctrine & Covenants 19:4-20; Alma 42)"** (Doctrinal New Testament Commentary, Bruce R. McConkie, page 87).



46 - fear - To fear God is to feel reverence and awe for him and to obey his commandments. When used in reference to Deity, it doesn't carry the connotation of being scared or troubled. It is a respect and love for God. At times, fear can carry the connotation of respect for the power and judgment of the Almighty. The following scriptures help us understand fear in relation to Deity;

- "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God"** (Deuteronomy 6:13; Joshua 24:14; 1st Samuel 12:24)
- "Serve the Lord with fear"** (Psalms 2:11)
- "Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom"** (Psalms 111:10)
- "Fear the Lord and depart from evil"** (Proverbs 3:7)
- "It shall be well with them that fear God"** (Ecclesiastes 8:12)

"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12)
 "Fear God, and give glory to him" (Revelations 14:7; Doctrine & Covenants 88:104)
 "Prophets stirred up the people continually to keep them in the fear of the Lord" (Enos 1:23)
 "Alma and the sons of Mosiah fell to the earth, for the fear of the Lord came upon them" (Alma 36:7)
 "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling" (Mormon 9:27)
 "They who do not fear me, I will disturb and cause to tremble" (Doctrine & Covenants 10:56)
 "He that feareth me shall be looking for the signs of the coming of the Son of Man" (Doctrine & Covenants 45:39)

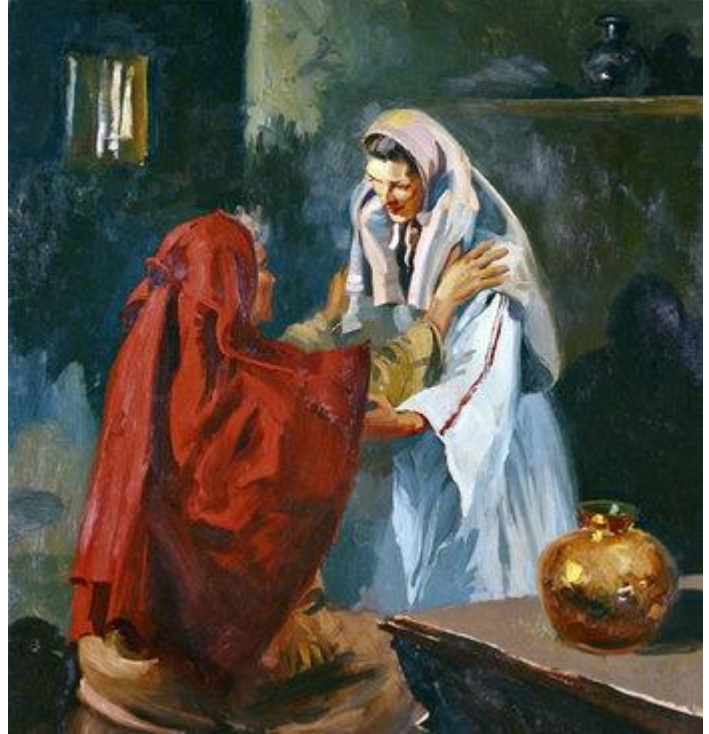
47 - **shewed** - The word "shewed" is translated from the Greek word "ποιέω" or "poieō". It means to make, or to do. The phrase containing "shewed" associated with this footnote might be reworded as "He hath **made** strength with his arm", or "He hath **produced** strength with his arm".

48 - **strength** - The word "strength" is translated from the Greek word "κράτος" or "kratos". It means force or strength. It can also mean power, might, mighty with great power, or dominion. "Literally, 'he has produced the might of his arm'. This strange expression seems to be an allusion to Psalms 89:13....The anthropomorphism of God's arm is meant to symbolize his strength or power." (The Gospel According to Luke I-IX, Anchor-Yale Bible, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, page 368). The Book of Psalms reads, "Thou hast a mighty arm: strong is thy hand, and high is thy right hand." (Psalms 89:13).

49 - **arm** - The up reached arms symbolize prayer, supplication, and surrender. The arms also symbolizes sovereign power, will and strength. The arms also represent the power to move and act. (An Illustrated Encyclopedia of Traditional Symbols, J.C. Cooper, page 15). When referring to the arm of the Lord, the symbolism conveys the idea of God's omnipotence.

50 - **scattered** - The word "scattered" is derived from the Greek word "διασκορπίζω" or "diaskorpizō". It means to scatter abroad, disperse, or to winnow. It is a word commonly used in the separating of chaff from wheat; hence winnowing grain. It is a farming word. It is often used in scripture in allegorical form. The children of Israel would allow sin to enter into their ranks. The Lord would then "winnow" them, allowing the righteous to separate from the wicked. We tend to think of scattering as just a dispersing; however, the term means much more. When the Lord scatters, he is doing so to separate that which is good from that which is bad.

51 - **proud** - The word "proud" is translated from the Greek word "ὑπερήφανος" or "hyperēphanos". It has two defined usages. First, showing one's self above others, overtopping, conspicuous above others, or pre-eminent. Second, an exaggerated estimate of one's means or merits, despising others or even treating them with contempt, or haughty. Biblically, it is when a people become so self absorbed that they don't need God, and even feel that they are beyond Him in any shape of form. In 1989, President Ezra Taft Benson addressed the church on the subject of pride. His talk was so insightful and powerful that it is still referenced over twenty years later when the subject of pride is discussed. Rather than paraphrase, here are major excerpts from his talk:



President Ezra Taft Benson said, "Pride is a very misunderstood sin, and many are sinning in ignorance. (See Mosiah 3:11; 3 Nephi 6:18.) In the scriptures there is no such thing as righteous pride—it is always considered a sin. Therefore, no matter how the world uses the term, we must understand how God uses the term so we can understand the language of holy writ and profit thereby. (See 2 Nephi 4:15; Mosiah 1:3–7; Alma 5:61.) Most of us think of pride as self-centeredness, conceit, boastfulness, arrogance, or haughtiness. All of these are elements of the sin, but the heart, or core, is still missing. The central feature of pride is enmity—enmity toward God and enmity toward our fellowmen. Enmity means "hatred toward, hostility to, or a state of opposition." It is the power by which Satan wishes to reign over us. Pride is essentially competitive in nature. We pit our will against God's. When we direct our pride toward God, it is in the spirit of "my will and not thine be done." As Paul said, they "seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's." (Philippians 2:21.) Our will in competition to God's will allows desires, appetites, and passions to go unbridled. (See Alma 38:12; 3 Nephi 12:30.) The proud cannot accept the authority of God giving direction to their lives. (See Hel. 12:6.) They pit their perceptions of truth against God's great knowledge, their abilities versus God's priesthood power, their accomplishments against His mighty works. Our enmity toward God takes on many labels, such as rebellion, hard-heartedness, stiff-neckedness, unrepentant, puffed up, easily offended, and sign seekers. The proud wish God would agree with them. They aren't interested in changing their opinions to agree with God's. Another major portion of this very prevalent sin of pride is enmity toward our fellowmen. We are tempted daily to elevate ourselves above others and diminish them. (See Hel. 6:17; D&C 58:41.) The proud make every man their adversary by pitting their intellects, opinions, works, wealth, talents, or any other worldly measuring device against others. In the words of C. S. Lewis: 'Pride gets no pleasure out of having something, only out of having more of it than the next man. ... It is the comparison that makes you proud: the pleasure of being above the rest. Once the element of competition has gone, pride has gone.' (Mere Christianity, New York: Macmillan, 1952, pp. 109–10.)" (General Conference, "Beware of Pride", Ezra Taft Benson, April 1989)

The statement by Mary was that the Lord would "winnow" the proud. They are the Chaff. He will separate them from the Righteous. In the Book of Exodus we read, "Now I know that the Lord is greater than all gods: for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly he was above them." (Exodus 18:11) Regardless of the high enlighten state we believe we have obtained, or believe our intellect and understanding to be, God is always above us. His knowledge knows no end, and yet we often incorrectly gauge our status not by Him but by our earthly accomplishments. President Benson continued;

"Some prideful people are not so concerned as to whether their wages meet their needs as they are that their wages are more than someone else's. Their reward is being a cut above the rest. This is the enmity of pride. When pride has a hold on our hearts, we lose our independence of the world and deliver our freedoms to the bondage of men's judgment. The world shouts louder than the whisperings of the Holy Ghost. The reasoning of men overrides the revelations of God, and the proud let go of the iron rod. (See 1 Ne. 8:19-28; 1 Ne. 11:25; 1 Ne. 15:23-24.) Pride is a sin that can readily be seen in others but is rarely admitted in ourselves. Most of us consider pride to be a sin of those on the top, such as the rich and the learned, looking down at the rest of us. (See 2 Ne. 9:42.) There is, however, a far more common ailment among us—and that is pride from the bottom looking up. It is manifest in so many ways, such as faultfinding, gossiping, backbiting, murmuring, living beyond our means, envying, coveting, withholding gratitude and praise that might lift another, and being unforgiving and jealous. Disobedience is essentially a prideful power struggle against someone in authority over us. It can be a parent, a priesthood leader, a teacher, or ultimately God. A proud person hates the fact that someone is above him. He thinks this lowers his position. Selfishness is one of the more common faces of pride. "How everything affects me" is the center of all that matters—self-conceit, self-pity, worldly self-fulfillment, self-gratification, and self-seeking. Pride results in secret combinations which are built up to get power, gain, and glory of the world. (See Hel. 7:5; Ether 8:9, 16, 22-23; Moses 5:31.) This fruit of the sin of pride, namely secret combinations, brought down both the Jaredite and the Nephite civilizations and has been and will yet be the cause of the fall of many nations. (See Ether 8:18-25.) Another face of pride is contention. Arguments, fights, unrighteous dominion, generation gaps, divorces, spouse abuse, riots, and disturbances all fall into this category of pride. Contention in our families drives the Spirit of the Lord away. It also drives many of our family members away. Contention ranges from a hostile spoken word to worldwide conflicts. The scriptures tell us that "only by pride cometh contention." (Prov. 13:10; see also Prov. 28:25.)" (General Conference, "Beware of Pride", Ezra Taft Benson, April 1989).



52 - imagination - The word "imagination" is translated from the Greek word "διδόμοι" or "dianoia". It has the following definition:

Definition:

- I. the mind as a faculty of understanding, feeling, desiring
- II. understanding
- III. mind, i.e. spirit, way of thinking and feeling
- IV. thoughts, either good or bad

It is evident that the Greek word does not translate very well into the modern use of our word "**imagination**". Imagination, as we see it, is the ability to visualize something that has not been realized or seen. It is associated with a person's creativity. It can also be used to convey how a person perceives things rather than how they really are. The phrase "**imagination of their hearts**" could be translated as "**the thoughts or understandings of their hearts**". It could also be "**the perceptions of their hearts**" or "**the knowledge of their hearts**". The scriptures used the term in multiple places. Some references are as follows:

- "**imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth**" (Genesis 8:21, Moses 8:22)
- "**though I walk in the imagination of mine heart**" (Deuteronomy 29:19)
- "**I know their imagination**" (Deuteronomy 31:21)
- "**understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts**" (1 Chronicles 28:9)
- "**imagination of their evil heart**" (Jeremiah 3:17, Jeremiah 7:24, Jeremiah 9:14, Jeremiah 13:10, Jeremiah 16:12)
- "**walketh after the imagination of his own heart**" (Jeremiah 23:17)
- "**became vain in their imaginations**" (Romans 1:21)
- "**Casting down imaginations, and every high thing**" (2 Corinthians 10:5)
- "**because of the foolish imaginations of his heart**" (1 Nephi 2:11, 1 Nephi 17:20)
- "**large and spacious building ... is vain imaginations**" (1 Nephi 12:18)
- "**Imagining up some vain thing**" (3 Nephi 2:2)
- "**imagined up unto yourselves a god**" (Mormon 9:10)

53 - heart - The "heart" is the center of desire. It is the symbol of one's spiritual and physical self. (An Illustrated Encyclopedia of Traditional Symbols, J.C. Cooper, page 82). A man's heart will dictate his actions. Generally speaking, if a man truly desires something, it is just a matter of time before he has it. Unfortunately, if a man's desires are wicked, eventually wicked actions will follow. Similarly, if a man has righteous intentions, his actions will normally follow a righteous path. Most sins do not start with action, but rather desire. The old adage, "**For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee.**" (Proverbs 23:7), seems to fit here.

54 - seat - The term "seat" might seem inconspicuous, that is until you look at the Greek translation. The word seat is derived from the Greek word "θρόνος" or "thronos". It means a throne, and has a defined usage associated with Kings, the Messiah, and God himself. The definition is as follows:

- I. a throne seat
 - A. a chair of state/royalty having a footstool
 - B. assigned in the New Testament to kings, hence, kingly power or royalty
 - i. metaph. to God, the governor of the world
 - ii. to the Messiah, Christ, the partner and assistant in the divine administration
 - a. hence divine power belonging to Christ
 - iii. to judges i.e. tribunal or bench
 - iv. to elders

To consider one's self worthy of a throne, would be to elevate one's self above nearly all others. It is used by Mary to illustrate the pride of man.

55 - exalted - The Greek translation of the word "exalted" comes from "ὑψώω" or "hypsōō". It means "to lift up on high", or "to exalt". Because of the knowledge of the restored Gospel, we understand the word "exalted" as follows; **"To be exalted—or to gain exaltation—refers to the highest state of happiness and glory in the celestial realm. These blessings can come to us after we leave this frail and mortal existence. The time to prepare for our eventual salvation and exaltation is now."** (General Conference, Salvation and Exaltation, April 2008, Russell M. Nelson). Mary is not using the term exalted in the gospel sense, but rather in the mortal sense. Exaltation in the spiritual sense is eternal in nature and has to do with man's standing in relation to God. Exalting a man in mortality is something quite different. It has to do with man's relation to other men. In mortality, men look for ways to place themselves above other men. It is their status. Carnal men look to be exalted in the eyes of the world. There are several ways that men accomplish this. They do this through money. Men that have more money feel that they are higher in status than other men. They also do this through knowledge. If I know more than you, I am obviously smug and therefore better than you, or so they think. Power is another way that one elevates one's self. Titles like Doctor, Esquire, Your Honor, President, or CEO often equate to superiority, at least in the eyes of men. To those it is promised, **"And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low; and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day."** (Isaiah 2:17). And to those that did not elevate themselves, and remained humble, Mary testifies that they shall be raised up. The Apostle James similarly taught, **"Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up."** (James 4:10)



56 - low degree - The term "low degree" is derived from the Greek word "ταπεινός" or "tapeinos". It means "not rising far from the ground". It is a metaphor for "being humble". The message is clear that those who exalt themselves in the eyes of men, will be humbled by the Lord. The Lord has been very clear in this matter. He directed the words of Isaiah when he said, **"And the mean man shall be brought down, and the mighty man shall be humbled, and the eyes of the lofty shall be humbled;"** (Isaiah 5:15). Isaiah also said, **"Behold, the Lord, the Lord of hosts, shall lop the bough with terror: and the high ones of stature shall be hewn down, and the haughty shall be humbled."** (Isaiah 10:33).

57 - hungry - The word "hungry" is translated from the Greek word "πεινάω" or "peinaō". It means to hunger or to be hungry. It can also mean to be needy or to seek with eager desire. It is a word that is used metaphorically for those that are humble. Those that lack the status of man; i.e. riches, status or power, are the poor, the hungry, and the down trodden.

58 - good things - The phrase "good things" comes from the Greek word "ἀγαθός" or "agathos". It means useful, good, pleasant, excellent, upright, or honorable. The Lord promises that those who are low will be exalted. Unfortunately, that should not be translated that the lowly will be made rich or powerful in the eyes of men. The Lord does promise, **"Those who hunger and thirst after righteousness reap the rich spiritual blessings which bring peace in this life and eternal life in the world to come."** (Doctrinal New Testament Commentary, Bruce R. McConkie, page 87). It is this kind of exalting that the Psalmist writes of saying, **"The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad."** (Psalms 126:3). Mary was not made rich in worldly wealth. In fact, she was poor even after the birth of Jesus. She was also not free from trials. Mary had a testimony of how things work. She saw the blessings of her trials. She saw the beauty of the Lord's work. She understood the blessings of necessary things, as spoken of in the Book of Acts. **"For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things;"** (Acts 15:28).

59 - rich - The word "rich" is translated from the Greek as "πλουτέω" or "plouteō". It means to be rich, or to have abundance. It can be used metaphorically to symbolize being blessed, or have providence. The usage of this footnote would be the riches of the world.

60 - empty - The term "empty" is translated from the Greek word "κενός" or "kenos". It means to be empty, vain, or devoid of truth. It is often used as a metaphor for someone who is destitute of spiritual wealth.

61 - away - The term "away" is translated from the Greek word "ἐξαποστέλλω" or "exapostellō". It is an interesting word in that it means to send forth or send away, each having a slightly different connotation.

62 - holpen - Some have assumed that this word means helped because of its close spelling. However, it is derived from the Greek word "ἀντιλαμβάνω" or "antilambanō" meaning to lay hold of, or hold fast to anything. It can also mean to embrace, or to take one thing in the place of another. It could extrapolated that the word has some connection with helping; however that is not the normal use of the word.

63 - servant - The word "servant" is translated from the word "παῖς" or "pais". It is mostly used when referring to children; i.e. a young boy or girl or an infant. It can also be used to refer to a servant or a slave.

64 - Israel - The term "Israel" is translated from the Greek word "Ἰσραήλ" or "Israēl". The word "Israel" is originally derived from the Hebrew word "יִשְׂרָאֵל" or "Yisra'el", which literally means "God Prevails", though some would argue that it means "soldier of God" or "contender". It is interesting to look at the word "Israel" in light of its paleohebrew origin;

יִשְׂרָאֵל

← Hebrew reads right to left

- י - Light and Knowledge, seed of man, glory
- ש - The Children of Man, birth, bringing forth from the womb
- ר - The Scythe, sickle, sword, instrument of harvest
- א - The first, the Father, Alpha
- ל - The Scepter of Justice, the arm squared, the Whip, The Flail

65 - remembrance - The word "remembrance" is derived from the Greek word "μνάσθαι" or "mnaomai". It means to remind or to remember. It can also mean to be mindful. Spencer W. Kimball said that the most important word in scripture is "Remember". **"If we pay close attention to the uses of the word remember in the holy scriptures, we will recognize that remembering in the way God intends is a fundamental and saving principle of the gospel. This is so because prophetic admonitions to remember are frequently calls to action: to listen, to see, to do, to obey, to repent. When we remember in God's way, we overcome our human tendency simply to gird for the battle of life and actually engage in the battle itself, doing all in our power to resist temptation and avoid sinning."** (General Conference, "Remember, and Perish Not", Marlin K. Jensen, April 2007).

66 - fathers - The word "fathers" is derived from the Greek word "πατήρ" or "patēr". It means any male ancestor. There is a message here that the Lord will remember the mercy he promised to our fathers and to Abraham. Our fathers, by their obedience to their covenants, laid claim to the Abrahamic Covenant. This covenant promises mercy to the offspring of our fathers. A covenant and mercy that is eternally connected to the Savior. Paul taught, Luke records, **"Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ."** (Galatians 3:16). This is an important point, because it clarifies what the mercy spoken of refers to. It is the atonement of Jesus Christ. This is the promise of Salvation. This is a promise that will save our sons. Luke teaches, **"To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant;"** (Luke 1:72). Similarly, Micah teaches, **"He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old."** (Micah 7:19-20). We have much to thank our fathers for. Their righteousness laid claim on Heaven's promise for mercy to be extended to you and I. The scriptures read, **"And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers:"** (Acts 26:6).

67 - Abraham - The name "Abraham" is translated from the Greek word "Ἀβραάμ" of "Abraam". Interestingly, the translators choose to use the new name the Lord gave him after he entered into a covenant with Him. The original Greek used his original name "Abram". The name Abraham means "father of a multitude". Abraham is known as the father of the covenant. Abraham made covenants with God when he received the gospel, when he was ordained a high priest, and when he entered into celestial marriage. In these covenants, God promised great blessings to Abraham and his family. These blessings, which extend to all of Abraham's seed, are called the Abrahamic covenant. Among the promises made to Abraham were the following:

- ① His **posterity** would be numerous (see Genesis 17:5-6; Abraham 2:9; 3:14).
- ② His seed, or descendants, would receive the gospel and bear the **priesthood** (see Abraham 2:9).
- ③ Through the ministry of his seed, "all the families of the earth [would] be blessed, even with the blessings of the Gospel, which are the blessings of **salvation, even of life eternal**" (Abraham 2:11).

A person can receive all the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant—even if he or she is not a literal descendant of Abraham—by obeying the laws and ordinances of the gospel (see Galatians 3:26-29; 4:1-7; D&C 84:33-40). **"...all who accept the gospel would be adopted as the seed of Abraham and become inheritors of 'the blessings of the Gospel, which are the blessings of salvation, even of eternal life.'** (Abraham 2:10-11; Genesis 22:15-18)" (Doctrinal New Testament Commentary, Bruce R. McConkie, page 88).

68 - seed - The term "seed" is translated from the Greek word "σπέρμα" or "sperma", which means semen or sperm. It should be remembered that the Israelites were a patriarchal society. Promises, blessings, and inheritance were based on the lineage of the father. The fact that the term "seed" makes reference to the male seed makes perfect sense. In this case, reference is being made to the descendants of Father Abraham, both biological and adopted through the gospel covenant. **"Literally, 'and his seed'. The phrase echoes Genesis 17:9-10, with the name Abraham substituted for 'you'."** (The Gospel According to Luke I-IX, Anchor-Yale Bible, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, page 369). The Lord asked that the seed of Abraham to circumcise every male as a sign of the covenant they made. Circumcision is symbol of moral purity. Those who enter into the Lord's covenant, are required to be morally clean. **"And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations. This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised."** (Genesis 17:9-10). Interestingly, circumcision is closely related to the seed of man, implying purity in the creation of life.

69 - for ever - The term "forever" is another word for "eternal". The Lord's promises are eternal. **"According to that which was ordained in the midst of the Council of the Eternal God of all other gods before this world was, that should be reserved unto the finishing and the end thereof, when every man shall enter into his eternal presence and into his immortal rest."** (Doctrine & Covenants 121:32)

70 - abide - The word "abode" means someone's house, a place where someone lives. Mary literally lived as a guest of Zacharias and Elisabeth. Near Eastern hospitality required that guests be treated as near royalty. It could be assumed that Mary was treated with much kindness and care while she lived there. One Israelite tradition was to take a rock and split into two pieces. The home owner would write their name on the two matching stone. One was given to the guest and the other was retained by the host. Accepting the stone was a symbol that you were considered part of the family, and were treated as such while you were there.

71 - about three months - The time period of Mary's visit would have started soon after her annunciation from the angel Gabriel. This event is estimated to have occurred on or about July 2nd. We can safely say that Mary left Nazareth soon after her angelic visitation, as she left in haste to visit Elisabeth. Allowing for a margin of error, Mary would surely have left in Late June or Early July. If we base the year on Elder Talmage's book, "Jesus the Christ", Mary's annunciation would have been in 2BCE. A further discussion of the year of Jesus' birth will take place in Chapter 10. It would have taken several days to travel to the greater Jerusalem area, but that would not significantly changes the time period for Mary's visit to Elisabeth. If she stayed "about" three months, we would estimate that she departed in early October. It should be noted that Jewish months were lunar months, alternating between 29 and 30 days in length. Three months is about 89 days. Based on all the facts I have reviewed I believe that Mary visited Elisabeth in 5BCE and Jesus was born in 4BCE.

"Mary was a young woman when she was informed of her remarkable mission to be the mother of the Son of God. Initially it must have seemed to be a heavy responsibility to bear alone. It was the Lord Himself who provided Mary with someone to share her load. Through the message of the angel Gabriel, Mary was given the name of a trusted and sympathetic woman to whom she could turn for support—her cousin Elisabeth. This young maiden and her cousin, who was "well stricken in years," shared a common bond in their miraculous pregnancies, and I can only imagine how very important



the three months they spent together were to both of them as they were able to talk together, empathize with each other, and support one another in their unique callings. What a wonderful model they are of feminine nurturing between generations." (General Conference, "Sisterhood: Oh, How We Need Each Other", Bonnie L. Oscarson, April 2014).

The story leaves us with many unanswered questions. Below are several to ponder and discuss;

1. Did Mary stay for the birth of John? It appears that she left just prior. Why? What would prompt her to leave in the same haste that she arrived?
2. Joseph did not appear to accompany her. Was he aware of her departure? Did she tell him? Did he suspect anything was wrong?
3. Mary's leaving for three months and then returning pregnant to her betrothed would have been cause for great suspicion. Wouldn't this have made it even harder for Joseph to believe her story?
4. What did she do while she visited Elisabeth?