

## Elisabeth, Mother of John the Baptist

*Luke 1:5-7, 24-25, 39-45, & 57-64*

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**Introduction:** How much do you know about the Statue of Liberty? Consider these facts... We take time again this year to pay special tribute & attention to mothers. It should go without saying that we ought to honor our mothers every day of the year, but it is appropriate to set aside one day to render them honor & recognition. What does the Bible have to say about mothers? What kind of mother is God looking for today? Proverbs 31:10 asks, "*Who can find a virtuous woman...?*" I would like to suggest that Elisabeth, the mother of John the Baptist, is a worthy role model for motherhood, the kind of mother God is looking for today. Her name means 'My God is an oath' or 'My God is the absolutely Faithful One'. She was of priestly descent ("*one of the daughters of Aaron*") & she was married to a priest, Zacharias ("*course of Abia*" see I Chronicles 24). Notice that in the life of Elisabeth, humility comes before honor, as we see her righteousness, her reproach, her resignation, & her responsiveness. God is looking for mothers humble before Him that He might honor them!

### I. Her **standing** before God (:5-6) > Righteousness

- A. She was devout - "*righteous before God*" [How? Gen. 15:6; Rom. 10:1-3; II Cor. 5:21]
  - 1. Both Elisabeth & Zacharias were "*righteous before God*" – They considered it more important what God thought of them than what man thought. Compare & contrast one's reputation with one's character. [Are you "religious" or "redeemed"?)
  - 2. Blessed is the couple that are not only joined together in marriage, but are also joined to the Lord (cf. II Corinthians 6:14).
- B. She was obedient - "*walking in all the commandments...*" [Belief...behavior; creed...conduct]
  - 1. Requires a searching of the Scriptures: to know >
    - a. "*Commandments*" - from verb, 'to enjoin', an authoritative prescription (command).
    - b. "*Ordinances*" - from verb, 'to justify', things declared right.
  - 2. Requires a submitting to the Scriptures: to keep >
    - a. "*Walking*" - serving God faithfully [walking involves purpose, progress, & persistence].
    - b. "*In all*" – they desired to be completely obedient to the Lord, not treating God's Word like a smorgasbord (compare & contrast > "good to you & good for you").
- C. She was upright - "*blameless*"
  - 1. Elisabeth & Zacharias were "blameless", not sinless but without hypocrisy.
  - 2. The word comes from the verb = "not" + "to find fault" – hence, unable to find blame. Illustrate: "Teflon President"?

### II. Her **shame** before men (:7, :24-25) > Reproach

- A. Notice how she responded to reproach (:7 & cf. :6 & :25)
  - 1. Her double sorrow:
    - a. She was missing the joy of having children (see Psalms 127 & 128).
    - b. She was missing the potential lineage of the Messiah.
  - 2. Her difficult situation:
    - a. Since children were considered the blessing of God, barrenness was viewed as a curse.
    - b. Yet her disappointment did not lead to bitterness or estrangement from God.

Application: How do we bear up under trials, the seeming lack of blessings? Do we become bitter, or discouraged? Do we blame God, or refuse to surrender fully to Him? What kinds of reproaches are there today? Perhaps for those choosing to stay home & raise their children, to be called "just a housewife"?

B. Notice how she responded to revelation (:24-25)

1. She withdrew - "*hid herself five months*" ??
  - a. In order that she might spend time in prayer & praise to God.
  - b. Because she could not discuss this with anyone else - who would have believed her?  
Illustrate: Elisabeth at the next sewing circle or quilting bee??
2. She worshipped - "*the Lord hath dealt with me*"
  - a. It appears that Elisabeth sought seclusion in order to glorify & praise her God in silence for this great thing the Lord had done for her & Zacharias.
  - b. It should be true of us as well because we have been the recipients of God's gracious favor & mercy – He has saved us & blessed us more richly than we deserve.

III. Her **submission** to the Spirit of God (:39-45) > Resignation

A. Evidenced by her humility before God:

1. She puts herself in the background as she greets Mary.
2. She considers herself blessed to have this privilege.

B. Evidenced by her honor of Mary:

1. She shows no jealousy – that Mary is to be the mother of the Messiah.
2. She speaks words of blessing upon Mary (joyfully & wholeheartedly).

Do we truly rejoice at the blessing & favor given to others? (see I Cor. 13:5, "...love seeketh not her own...") Camper of the week? School spirit award? Employee of the month? (Note :58)

IV. Her **surrender** to the will of God (:57-64) > Responsiveness

[Note: Elisabeth does not exhibit a superior, "holier than thou" attitude, even toward those who may have previously mocked or ridiculed her for being childless. She does not gloat.]

A. The certainty in the naming:

1. "*Not so*" (:60) - an emphatic usage; "*he shall be called John.*"
2. "*His name is John*" (:63) - The name given by the angel (1:13). It is settled.

B. The significance of the naming:

1. "*Zacharias*" – "God remembers His covenant"
2. "*Elisabeth*" – "God is the absolutely Faithful One"
3. "*John*" – "God is merciful" or "Gracious one"
4. "*Jesus*" – "Jehovah saves" or "Jehovah is salvation"

Conclusion: What made Elisabeth such a "special" mother? Why should she be considered as the kind of mother God is looking for today? Her **age** made John's birth a miraculous event & brought attention to her circumstances. But it was her **attitude & affirmation** that made her the kind of mother that God is looking for yet today. Consider again her standing before God (righteousness), her shame before men (reproach), her submission to the Spirit of God (resignation), & her surrender to the will of God (responsiveness). Consider again the demonstration of God's faithfulness – in His timetable!

How about you this morning? Could you be considered devout before God, obedient to God, & upright before men? How do you handle not only the trials, but the triumphs of life? Have you submitted yourself fully to the Spirit of God, allowing Him full control in your life? (see Eph. 5:18) And are you surrendered to the will of God, seeking to know & to do His will as it is found in His Word? Have you trusted Christ as your Lord & Savior? Do you know for sure that your sins have been forgiven & that a home awaits you in heaven? May God continue to bless us with mothers today like Elisabeth of old. Remember, Bartholdi honored his mother by using her as the model for his sculpture! Truly God is looking for those humble before Him that He might honor them!