

INTRO: Luke 1:1-2 "...delivered to us by eyewitnesses and servants of the Word..." Luke was physician companion of Paul. 'Servants of Word' = disciples, esp. John; Pastor at Ephesus; tradition of Mary there; Jesus' last words; no mention of Joseph. Who better to interview about births than one of the mothers! Look at God's plan in preparing the world for Jesus. Elizabeth's role in it all...

I. ELIZABETH IS PREPARED BY GOD

A. Her background

1. from tribe of Levi (Aaron), as also her priest husband
2. south hill country rustics, not Jerusalem priestly snobs
3. advanced in years (60+) and barren

B. Her family role

1. v.6 - blameless life, as also husband
2. husband prayed for child (Lord has heard... child...)
3. once in a lifetime; by lot; why did God delay?
4. reminiscent of Sarah (Heb. 11:11 considered Him faithful Who prom)

C. Her help in pregnancy

1. Luke 1:62 "made signs" to Zechariah; ergo, mute and deaf
2. deaf mute husband a daily reminder of angel visit
3. hid self (quarantined) five months (avoid neighbor's gossip?)
4. God sent (?) Mary to help her in final three months
5. "your kinswoman in her old age" = angel invitation to visit Elizabeth

II. ELIZABETH PREPARED MARY

A. By her example

1. as per angel, Elizabeth's pregnancy was a sign for Mary (encourage)
2. Mary could watch a godly married couple prior to her own marriage
3. Elizabeth shielded Mary from Nazareth gossips for three months

B. By her inspired words

1. Luke 1:42 inspired by Holy Spirit
2. 1:43 "Mother of my Lord"
3. baby (3-month) leaping another sign for Mary (your greeting)
4. by Holy Spirit, Elizabeth blessed Mary for her believing (v.45)

III. ELIZABETH PREPARED HER SON JOHN

A. From conception

1. as per angel, no wine or strong drink 'from the womb'
2. i.e., a Nazarite, like Samson and Samuel
3. not their choice! God chose and dictated to these three
4. Elizabeth abstained from wine while pregnant
5. also insisted on the name 'John' (the Lord is gracious)

B. Giving her son a foundation on which to build his life

1. 'naming' episode shows her aversion to peer pressure; God's will
2. borne out by John '... in the wilderness until...'
3. and John's disregard for acceptance (vipers; Herodias)
4. John **knew** himself to be prophesied forerunner (Mom, or Spirit?)
5. as a good mother can teach God's Word to receptive child

IV. ELIZABETH PREPARES US

A. To believe

1. not only as example of trusting acceptance
2. verifies for us the trustworthiness of Old Testament prophesy
3. what God promises, happens (in absolution, supper, benediction)
4. even, and especially; the seeming impossible (v.37 angel to Mary)
5. aged pregnancy; virgin birth; Incarnation

B. To be receptive to the Holy Spirit

1. Elizabeth was open to hear, to speak by the Holy Spirit
2. taking to heart her role in God's salvation plan
3. Mary's Son was Elizabeth's Lord
4. and we know the rest of the story that Elizabeth didn't live to see
5. Mary's Son's death, Resurrection, Ascension; Atonement

C. So, who is the more blessed

1. sure, Elizabeth saw Jesus' mother
2. probably not her son's career; nor Jesus'
3. Elizabeth and we received the same Holy Spirit
4. by the Holy Spirit, we glorify God in our roles in life
5. acknowledging God's promised gracious Savior

CONCLUSION: Sometimes I have to back off and chide myself for being so concerned about world problems or personal problems or events. God has a great big detailed plan. It included Elizabeth, and her son John, and her Lord Jesus. Our Lord and Savior Jesus. Amen.