

Ark of Old Testament	Mary: Ark of the New Testament
1) 2 Sam 6:1-11 The Ark travelled to House of Obed-Edom in hill country of Judea	1) Lk 1:39 Mary travelled to the House of Elizabeth and Zechariah in the hill country of Judea.
2) 2 Sam 6:14 King David – dressed as a priest – danced and leapt in front of “the Ark”	2) Lk 1:41 John the Baptist – of Priestly lineage – leapt for joy in his mother’s womb before Mary who carried Jesus
3) 2 Sam 6:9: David asked: “How can the Ark of the Lord come to me?”	3) Lk 1:43 Elizabeth asked: “How can the Mother of my Lord come to me?”
4) 2 Sam 6:15: David shouted (for joy) at the presence of the Ark.	4) Lk 1:42 Elizabeth “exclaimed with a loud cry” at the presence of Mary.
5) 2 Sam 6:11 The Ark remained in the House of Obed-Edom for 3 months	5) Lk 1:56 Mary remained for 3 months in Elizabeth’s house.
6) 2 Sam 6:11 The house of Obed-Edom was blessed by the presence of the Ark	6) Lk 1:39-35 The word “BLESSED” used 3 times! Everyone in E’s house was blessed through Mary
7) The Ark returns to its home – but ends up in Jerusalem where God’s Presence and Glory are revealed in the Temple: 2 Sam 6:12; 1 Kings 8:9-11	7) Mary returns home but eventually ends up in Jerusalem, where she presents God-Incarnate in the Temple of God: Lk 1:56; 2:21-22

- On first reading the Visitation we don’t see the Ark.
- We need Elizabeth to uncover the mystery for us –
- This is a meeting between two Women who are POWERLESS in society but POWERFUL in God’s Plan for Humanity.
- They are powerful in faith, hope and love – the 3 greatest things in the Kingdom of God cf. 1 Cor 13
- Elizabeth’s relationship with God gives her DISCERNMENT so that she can CONFIRM Mary’s gift without seeing anything.
- It is through Elizabeth that Luke tells the READER about the mystery in Mary - that God’s Word has come to pass...

1:39 **“Mary set out in haste”**. The Divine Love present in Mary wants to express His Presence in a work for Elizabeth’s Household. Jesus, present in Mary:

- a) will turn Elizabeth into a prophetess
- b) will sanctify John in his mother’s womb – fulfilling the prophecy of Lk 1:15-16
- c) will cure Zechariah of deafness and dumbness
- d) will transform Zechariah into a prophet

- Thus, Luke illustrates the transforming power of Jesus’ Presence – as we see later in the Gospel

Mary is the first CHRISTOPHER = ‘Christ-Carrier’

Wherever she goes she brings Him to His People – thus she is an agent of Salvation for Humanity.

1:41 “the child leapt in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit”

- this is the action of God on both mother and child
- the destiny of the child is revealed: Malachi 4:2
- Ps 113:1-8 shows nature leaping with joy at the Presence of God

- so, John's response reveals the Presence of Jesus in the New Ark of the Covenant

1:42 "of all women You are the most blessed" All women are blessed in being the mothers of Humanity.

Why? "blessed is the fruit of your womb. Why should I be honoured with a visit from the Mother **OF MY LORD!**"

LORD = ADONAI is a title for God in the Bible.

- Yet Luke has used this word from the beginning: Lk 1:6, 9, 11, 15, 16, 17, 25
- Luke uses 'Lord' for Jesus, not only as a greeting but AS A TITLE:
Luke 2:11; 7:13; 10:1; 11:39; 12:42; 17:6; 18:6; 19:8, 31 esp. 24:3, 34
- Elizabeth's "blessed" means she declares a BEATITUDE on Mary.
Jesus underlined this blessedness in Lk 11:27: "**Blessed are those who HEAR the Word of God and keep it** (put it into practice).
 - this was Mary's blessedness from Elizabeth also "Blessed is she who believed..."

1:46-55 Mary's Response = **THE MAGNIFICAT**

1:46 "My Soul exults in God, my Saviour"

- the one most completely saved carries the Saviour to all other souls
- this message of Salvation is the reason for writing the Gospel
- Jesus is the Saviour: 2:11 ... He brings Salvation 2:30; 19:9
- In Acts the Apostles also preach Salvation: Acts 13:26; 28:28

1:47 "His lowly servant" Mary's lowliness was social and political as a young lady of the poorer classes.

- but the lowliness which impresses God is the opposite of the arrogance Jesus will meet in the Religious Leadership – whom God can't use... for He humbles the proud of heart.

1:49 "The Almighty has done great things for me..."

- God, for whom nothing is impossible (Almighty) has done GREAT THINGS in His lowly servant who was OPEN fully to do His Will: cf. Deut 10:1

1:50 "He has routed the PROUD of heart"

- Mary moves from what God has done for HER to what He has done in History
- He has always routed the proud and raised the lowly.

Psalms 113:7-8 "**He raises up the poor from the dust... lifts the needy from the dunghill... he sets them with princes... princes of the people.**"

The arrogant who resist God in Luke's Gospel:

Luke 5:21-22, 30:	Scribes & Pharisees	14:1	Pharisees
6:7-8	Scribes & Pharisees	16:15	Pharisees
7:39	Pharisees	18:9	Pharisees
13:14	Synagogue Official		

Proverbs 3:34 **He (Yahweh) mocks those who mock, but accords His favour to the humble.**

James 4:6 **God opposes the proud, but gives generously to the humble.**

1:54-55 God already “took Israel by the hand” in the Exodus.
Jesus is about to take all Humanity ‘by the hand’ to rescue us from our sins.

Notice **The Reversal theme:** what happens the proud... and the lowly

- Why “all generations will call Mary Blessed” ... even though now it seems nothing.
- Just as Yahweh reversed the status of slaves in Egypt to make them His own People... so He will now take the Gentile world and reverse its paganism to make them also into His own people...
- This is how God shows mercy to all: i.e. undeserved love.
The Magnificat calls God “Lord”, “Saviour”, “Holy” – these are the titles for Mary’s Son also.

Mary’s Magnificat vs Hannah’s Prayer **Lk 1:46-55 (1 Samuel 2:1-10)**

- Both express joy and thanksgiving for God’s intervention in **Motherhood**
- Both celebrate God’s action in humbling the proud and raising the lowly.
 - But Hannah focuses on God’s faithfulness in hearing her plea for a son, while Mary proclaims God’s intervention into human history with the Incarnation of God’s Only-Begotten Son.
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- Both celebrate God’s Mercy and Justice as He fulfills His Promise to give a Redeemer to Humanity.
- Both proclaim God’s holiness and power.
- The Magnificat of Mary echoes themes from Hannah’s prayer showing her knowledge of Sacred Scripture.

Differences

- 1) Hannah focused on her personal life.
Mary focused on Redemption of Humanity
- 2) Hannah focussed on God’s goodness / faithfulness to **herself**.
Mary “ “ “ “ “ to His Plan to Redeem...
- 3) Hannah’s prayer is general while Mary’s prayer is specific.

In essence Mary’s Magnificat uniquely reflects the significance of Jesus’ Birth fulfilling prophecy and the promises mentioned by Hannah.

Many Psalms are referred to here: Ps 102:17, 111:9, 98:3, 107:9

4th EVENT

[Birth of John, the Baptist Circumcision of John the Baptist

- This text forms a hinge in the Infancy Narrative.
 - It has the fulfillment of one prophecy and the declaration of another one.
- The prophecy of the Angel Gabriel is fulfilled despite the human resistance of Zechariah.
- Luke wants us to see that if God's Will is declared, that He will do what He says regardless of human non-cooperation cf. Acts 5:35-39
- Again, Elizabeth shines, as she resists social pressure in naming John.
- Zechariah has the last word in a patriarchal household.
- "They made signs to him" – since he was deaf-mute
- Zechariah, the priest, wrote the first words of the New Testament: "His name is John".
- 'John' means... the grace of God... or God is gracious
- This was a fitting introduction to the Era of Redemption when the Grace of God would be poured out on the Gentiles and they would be co-opted into the People of God: cf. Eph. 2:11-22
- In Luke 1:13 the Angel said the child was to be called John, therefore this was God's Will.
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- The moment Zechariah **obeyed** God's command the chastisement was lifted from him.
 - This will happen also to the Church and the world **TODAY!**
 - All must return to God's Way and God's Will – the **only way** to Life eternal.
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- Maria Valtorta and other Mystics say Blessed Virgin Mary was present at these events
 - That she held the Forerunner in her arms before she held the Saviour.

In 1:13 the Angel said "many would rejoice at" John's birth.

In 1:85 we see that this came to pass.

Luke is showing us prophesy and fulfillment before giving another Prophecy!

The Benedictus: Luke 1:67-79

- Zechariah the priest can **NOW** give a message from God – now that he is in God's Will.
- He begins as Jewish prayer begins by BLESSING GOD.

1:68 "God **HAS** VISITED His People" - illustrated by Jesus present in His Mother's womb!

- the Messianic Era has begun.
- God's **VISIT** means an historic intervention into Human Life on earth. Other such interventions:

Cf. Gen 21:1 for the birth of Isaac

Gen 50:24 Joseph's prophecy about the future Exodus

Ex 4:31 The people realize Joseph's prophecy is fulfilled. "God **has** visited.

Ruth 1:6 She heard God had visited her people...

1:69 "God has raised up **A HORN** for salvation". This means A **Power** for Salvation.
Jesus, the power for salvation is **present** at this announcement!



- “in the House of David” This means Zechariah **knows** who Mary’s Son is!
 - all the priests will know – because they kept meticulous records.
 - It was the priests in the Temple who chose Joseph as Mary’s spouse...
Therefore, they know from the start that Jesus is the claimant to the Throne of David.
- ... as the prophets **said**: Luke is emphasizing Prophecy / Fulfilment throughout.

1:70 “God promised to save us from our enemies” but people think that **Human Beings** are their enemies! Paul explains in Eph. 6:10-18 that our **true** enemies are the agents of evil in high places – both human and preternatural.

1:72 God “remembers His holy Covenant”. cf. Lev 26:42 ; Ps106:45; Ps105:8-9

Notice that Zachariah goes back to **Abraham**: Gen 22:7 – not **Mosaic** Law.

When St. Paul wrote to the Christians in Rome, he also went back before Moses’ time to the faith of Abraham: cf. Rom ch. 4

Luke **also** does this in Acts 3:25 - to emphasize that Gentile believers were NOT obliged to obey the Law of Moses - yet we are the children of Abraham because in Gen 22:18 God promised “**all the nations of the earth shall bless themselves by your descendants, as a reward for your obedience**”.

- Since Luke writes for Gentiles he reminds us of this great promise – that through Jesus – the Horn of Salvation, Saviour of the world – we become spiritual children of Abraham.

1:74-75 The freedom to worship God and serve Him in Holiness was always the aspiration of God’s People – both Old Testament and New Testament – for the Church Luke writes to is a persecuted one.

1:76-79 Zechariah **turns to his new-born son**, John, and prophesies his future destiny

- this was prophesied by Angel Gabriel in Luke 1:16-17
- John was destined to prepare the people to meet their Messiah-Saviour which we will observe in Chapter 3.
- To be prepared for a visitation of God, the emphasis **was** and **is** - in recent messages from Heaven – on the forgiveness of sins - hence John will preach repentance and will baptize
 - Jesus will do the same initially in His Ministry...
- Since Luke is dealing with Gentiles coming to Christ from a dark, degenerate world, he emphasizes the forgiveness of sins throughout his Gospel.
Luke 3:3; 4:18; 5:20-21, 23-24; 7:48-49; 11:4; 17:4; **23:34** “Father, forgive them...”

1.78 Repentance and Forgiveness opens the “bowels of Mercy” (literal translation!) from God which brings healing and restoration to Humanity.

This transformation will come through Jesus – present in Mary’s womb right now – He **is** THE RISING SUN coming to visit us.

1:79 Jesus is THE LIGHT of the world who will draw Humanity out of the darkness of sin, death and hell on all levels of reality... physical, mental, emotional and spiritual: Ps 106:10, 14

- guiding our feet into the Way of Peace: Isaiah 59:8
- This is the way to Union with God on earth and Beatitude in Heaven: cf. Is 35

