

***He Who is Mighty Has Done Great Things***

Luke 1:26-56

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**Overview:** God's plan of redemption begins to reach its highest point with the incarnation of Jesus. Gabriel informs Mary, a godly woman who is not yet married, that she will give birth to the Messiah through supernatural means. Mary receives this news with an inquisitive but humble heart, confessing that God can do anything and that she is His servant. When Mary meets Elizabeth, it becomes abundantly clear that while their futures are interrelated, Jesus is much greater than John. Mary then praises God for His might and mercy as He demonstrates once more that He scatters the proud and exalts the humble.

**01. God works in ways that defy human wisdom and includes supernatural intervention; therefore we should worship Him with our minds as well as our hearts.**

**02. Mary's favor from God was an act of grace that made her unique among all people; therefore she should be remembered but not worshipped.**

**03. The incarnation of Jesus reminds us that God's promises are fulfilled over time; therefore we should live by faith in the future rather than simply living for the present.**

*Eyewitness of Christmas*

1. Compare the occasion of Mary's conception of Jesus in Luke 1:26-38 with Matthew 1:18-25. What is the focus of each narrative? What do we learn from reading both narratives that we cannot learn from reading only one? What impresses you about Mary's reaction to this news? What impresses you about Joseph's reaction?

2. Do you have any intellectual reservations regarding the virgin birth of Jesus? How might such reservations lead to other questions about the truthfulness of Scripture? Since nothing is impossible with God (Luke 1:37), is it fair to say that those who do not believe in the virgin birth (or miracles, or the resurrection of Jesus) risk placing their wisdom above God?

3. What considerations come to mind as you read of John's prenatal filling with the Holy Spirit (1:15) and his reaction while in the presence of Jesus (2:41)? What evidences of true conversion might be evident in young children? What conclusions might we draw from this narrative regarding the reality and value of life in the mother's womb?

4. In what ways do certain Christian traditions give too much attention to Mary? How is our faith actually diminished when we emphasize the work of God's servants more than we should? How is our faith enhanced when we recognize the gracious work of God through such lowly servants as Mary?

5. What does Mary's Magnificat teach us about the Lord (2:46-55)? What does it teach us about the kind of people we should be and the attitudes in others that we should value? In what ways is her song of praise similar to Hannah's song of praise in 1 Samuel 2:1-10? What do these echoes suggest about Mary's knowledge of Scripture?

**For Further Reading: J. Gresham Machen, *The Virgin Birth of Christ* (Solid Ground Christian Books, 2011; originally published 1930).**

*Eyewitness of Christmas*