



## Luke Chapter 1:39-45 - Answers

*Encouragement*

When you have been discouraged in the past, what did it take to encourage you?

1. :39-40 What did Mary do right away which proves to us she believed what the Angel of the Lord told her? Why is this proof?

She followed the leading of what the angel had said. She took action!

When it comes to understanding faith, you could say there are two parts:

1. Hearing something true.
2. Acting on it.

Faith is not a feeling. It's a "do".

James, the brother of Jesus, in the only letter he had included in the Bible, says: *"But be doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves."* James 1:22. And then, a little farther on in that same letter, James gives even more detailed illustrations of what faith really is. James 2:14-24.

2. :39 How long of a trip was this for Mary? Did Joseph go with her?

The trip from Nazareth to the Jerusalem area was about 120 miles. Generally a person could walk about 20 miles a day. So how long did this trip take Mary, one way? Almost a week. We can be pretty sure Joseph didn't go with her, because we find out later that Joseph didn't even know she was expecting a baby until she returned from this trip. But did she go alone. Definitely not! To travel alone would have been exceedingly dangerous, what with robbers and violent people waiting for their prey on any road.

So why did she make such a long and arduous trip? I think it's because she needed encouragement. She believed what the angel said. She had faith in God. But she needed encouragement from a flesh and blood person – someone she knew and could pour out her heart to.



3. :41-45 What wonderful things happened as soon as Elizabeth saw Mary?  
How did this help both Elizabeth and Mary?

- Elizabeth heard Mary's voice, and immediately her baby, John, moved energetically inside of her.
- Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and then...
- Elizabeth blessed Mary with encouraging words.
- Elizabeth confirms Mary's faith reaction to the angel's message
- And Elizabeth prophesies that these very things will definitely come to pass.

How did this help Mary? Someone she loved and trusted fully believed her story. Sometimes people just don't believe your story when your life is not normal like everyone else's. Joseph will soon hear this story and, even though he loved and trusted Mary, he would not at first believe it. So Mary needed to know that there was someone who loved the Lord who believed her story. And, not only believed it, but didn't even have to be convinced of it! Elizabeth believed Mary's story before she even told it! What an encouragement!

How did this help Elizabeth? She was 6 months pregnant with John. She was too old to be bearing a child. It must have helped her tremendously to have another assurance from God that He was, indeed, working just like He said He was going to. This baby within her would be born safely and would fulfill the role God had given him. This was going to happen!!! Encouragement.

4. :41 Why does the scripture say Elizabeth was "filled with the Holy Spirit"? Aren't all believers filled with the Holy Spirit the moment they believe?

OK. This is a great time to talk about the Holy Spirit. What do we know about Him?

1. He is God.
2. He is the 3<sup>rd</sup> member of the Trinity. God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit.
3. One of His main jobs has always been to empower people of faith to do what the Trinity wanted them to do.
4. Another of His main jobs has always been to focus people on Jesus. (Not on Himself)
5. After Jesus' resurrection the Holy Spirit has personally indwelt each believer at the moment of their belief. In Old Testament times, He didn't do that. He came "upon" people at different times in different places in order to empower them to do a specific job, and then He was gone.



So...was this an Old Testament “empowering” for Elizabeth, or was it a New Testament coming to faith moment, so that she became a believer in Jesus at that very moment?

This happened before Jesus’ resurrection, right? So this was an Old Testament empowering. Elizabeth had a special job to do for the Trinity right at this very moment. She needed insight and wisdom and courage which couldn’t just come from her own self.

Look at this progression of events after Jesus’ resurrection, and see how the Old Testament purposes of the Holy Spirit changed into His New Testament purposes: Acts 1:4,5 Acts 2:1-4 Acts 7:51 Acts 10:44-48 Acts 22:21, and then Romans 8:1, 9 and 23

So, in our time, the New Testament time, why does the Holy Spirit indwell us right away at our moment of faith, and then stay with us forever? Here are the things He accomplishes within us:

- Romans 8:1-8 He teaches us how to walk in the Spirit.
- Romans 8:9-11 He gives us life which lasts forever.
- Romans 8:12-17 He confirms in our hearts that we are God’s children.
- Romans 8:18-25 He keeps us safe in Him until we get our new bodies which will never sin again
- Romans 8:26-30 He prays for us.
- Romans 8:31&32 He gives us all things
- Romans 8:33&34 He protects us from accusations
- Romans 8:35-39 He keeps anything from separating us from Him.

Here’s the question we ought to be asking ourselves after seeing what He does in us: Why do we get this ongoing indwelling of the Holy Spirit when the Old Testament saints did not?

Good question. What is it we are supposed to be accomplishing with this unheard of power and protection – something the Old Testament saints could not?



5. :42-44 How did Elizabeth know, without being told, that Mary was pregnant with the Savior of the world?

The Holy Spirit told her.

6. :44 How would little unborn John the Baptist have known that Mary was carrying the Messiah?

The Holy Spirit told him.

7. :44 Why was it a foregone conclusion, while John the Baptist was still in the womb, that he would choose to obey and have faith in God and fulfill the plan of God as he grew up? Didn't he have freedom of choice? (look at Romans 8:29 -30 and Romans 9:10-13)

God chose John, and God foreknew what John would choose.

8. :42 & 45 Elizabeth gives three "blessings" to Mary. What are they?

- She is a specially-blessed woman.
- The baby she is bearing is a specially-blessed person.
- The things she has believed will come true.

Therefore, how should we, in our day, treat the memory of Mary? Not as a God herself – she would hate that! And not as a sinless person – she would hate that! But certainly with respect and a great desire to learn from her.

9. How important are the blessings we give to one another?

Blessings...encouragement – these are the food we crave when we are teetering on the brink of the unknown.

10. What blessing do you wish someone would give to you today?

11. What blessing can you give to someone else today? What must be true of this blessing in order for it to be a true blessing?



If I could just ask God a question...

Why is it so hard to share my faith? What can I do to get someone's attention?

It's hard to share your faith because your faith is so unbelievable by normal people. It doesn't make sense.

What can you do to get someone's attention?

- *Ask God to do whatever He needs to do in your life to give you the opportunity to share your faith.* Whatever. Just like Mary, you may end up with a situation hardly anyone would believe. When you do, look for encouragement from someone else whom the Holy Spirit has placed there for you. And then go live and share your faith.
- *Be intentional.* Go where the unbelieving are. Sit in the smoking section. Join a club. Offer to cook a meal. Ask if you can pray for someone's needs. Invite someone over to dinner.