

Bible Text New International Version	Who are the people involved and what is the situation?	What traits of God are displayed in this story? What are the traits of the people?	In what ways do you see yourself in this story? How is God inviting you to respond?
<p>Luke 1:5-56</p> <p>The Birth of John the Baptist Foretold</p> <p>⁵ In the time of Herod king of Judea there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah; his wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron. ⁶ Both of them were righteous in the sight of God, observing all the Lord's commands and decrees blamelessly. ⁷ But they were childless because Elizabeth was not able to conceive, and they were both very old.</p> <p>⁸ Once when Zechariah's division was on duty and he was serving as priest before God, ⁹ he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to go into the temple of the Lord and burn incense. ¹⁰ And when the time for the burning of incense came, all the assembled worshipers were praying outside.</p> <p>¹¹ Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. ¹² When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear. ¹³ But the angel said to him: "Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to call him John. ¹⁴ He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, ¹⁵ for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before he is born. ¹⁶ He will bring back many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. ¹⁷ And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." <i>(continued)</i></p>			

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<p>Luke 1:5-56 – continued</p> <p>¹⁸ Zechariah asked the angel, “How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well along in years.”</p> <p>¹⁹ The angel said to him, “I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news. ²⁰ And now you will be silent and not able to speak until the day this happens, because you did not believe my words, which will come true at their appointed time.”</p> <p>²¹ Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah and wondering why he stayed so long in the temple. ²² When he came out, he could not speak to them. They realized he had seen a vision in the temple, for he kept making signs to them but remained unable to speak.</p> <p>²³ When his time of service was completed, he returned home. ²⁴ After this his wife Elizabeth became pregnant and for five months remained in seclusion. ²⁵ “The Lord has done this for me,” she said. “In these days he has shown his favor and taken away my disgrace among the people.”</p> <p>The Birth of Jesus Foretold</p> <p>²⁶ In the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, ²⁷ to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. ²⁸ The angel went to her and said, “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.”</p> <p>²⁹ Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. ³⁰ But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. ³¹ You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. <i>(continued)</i></p>			

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<p>Luke 1:5-56 – continued</p> <p>³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, ³³ and he will reign over Jacob’s descendants forever; his kingdom will never end.”</p> <p>³⁴ “How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?”</p> <p>³⁵ The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called^a the Son of God. ³⁶ Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. ³⁷ For no word from God will ever fail.”</p> <p>³⁸ “I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “May your word to me be fulfilled.” Then the angel left her.</p> <p>Mary Visits Elizabeth</p> <p>³⁹ At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, ⁴⁰ where she entered Zechariah’s home and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴² In a loud voice she exclaimed: “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! ⁴³ But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴ As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵ Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!” <i>(continued)</i></p> <p>a. Luke 1:35 - Or <i>So the child to be born will be called holy,</i></p>			

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<p>Luke 1:5-56 – continued</p> <p>Mary’s Song</p> <p>⁴⁶ And Mary said: “My soul glorifies the Lord ⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, ⁴⁸ for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, ⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me— holy is his name. ⁵⁰ His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation. ⁵¹ He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. ⁵² He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. ⁵³ He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty. ⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful ⁵⁵ to Abraham and his descendants forever, just as he promised our ancestors.” ⁵⁶ Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about three months and then returned home.</p> <p>Luke 2:21-52</p> <p>²¹ On the eighth day, when it was time to circumcise the child, he was named Jesus, the name the angel had given him before he was conceived. <i>(continued)</i></p>			

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<p>Luke 2:21-52 – continued</p> <p>Jesus Presented in the Temple</p> <p>²² When the time came for the purification rites required by the Law of Moses, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³ (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord”^[b]), ²⁴ and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: “a pair of doves or two young pigeons.”^[c]</p> <p>²⁵ Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. ²⁶ It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. ²⁷ Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, ²⁸ Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying:</p> <p>²⁹ “Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss^[d] your servant in peace.</p> <p>³⁰ For my eyes have seen your salvation,</p> <p>³¹ which you have prepared in the sight of all nations:</p> <p>³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel.” <i>(continued)</i></p> <p>b. Luke 2:23 - Exodus 13:2,12 c. Luke 2:24 - Lev. 12:8 d. Luke 2:29 - Or <i>promised, / now dismiss</i></p>			

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<p>Luke 2:21-52 – continued</p> <p>³³ The child’s father and mother marveled at what was said about him. ³⁴ Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: “This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, ³⁵ so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too.”</p> <p>³⁶ There was also a prophet, Anna, the daughter of Penuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, ³⁷ and then was a widow until she was eighty-four.^e She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. ³⁸ Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.</p> <p>³⁹ When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth. ⁴⁰ And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on him.</p> <p>The Boy Jesus at the Temple</p> <p>⁴¹ Every year Jesus’ parents went to Jerusalem for the Festival of the Passover. ⁴² When he was twelve years old, they went up to the festival, according to the custom. ⁴³ After the festival was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. ⁴⁴ Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. ⁴⁵ When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. <i>(continued)</i></p> <p>e. Luke 2:37 - Or then had been a widow for eighty-four years.</p>			

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<p>Luke 2:21-52 – continued</p> <p>⁴⁶ After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷ Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. ⁴⁸ When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, “Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you.”</p> <p>⁴⁹ “Why were you searching for me?” he asked. “Didn’t you know I had to be in my Father’s house?”^f ⁵⁰ But they did not understand what he was saying to them.</p> <p>⁵¹ Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. ⁵² And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.</p> <p>John 2:1-12 Jesus Changes Water Into Wine</p> <p>2 On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus’ mother was there, ² and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. ³ When the wine was gone, Jesus’ mother said to him, “They have no more wine.”</p> <p>⁴ “Woman,^g why do you involve me?” Jesus replied. “My hour has not yet come.”</p> <p>⁵ His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.” <i>(continued)</i></p> <p>f. Luke 2:49 - Or <i>be about my Father’s business.</i></p> <p>g. John 2:4, John 19:26 - The Greek for <i>Woman</i> does not denote any disrespect.</p>			

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<p>John 2:1-12 – <i>continued</i></p> <p>⁶ Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons.^[h]</p> <p>⁷ Jesus said to the servants, “Fill the jars with water”; so they filled them to the brim.</p> <p>⁸ Then he told them, “Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet.”</p> <p>They did so, ⁹ and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside ¹⁰ and said, “Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now.”</p> <p>¹¹ What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which he revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.</p> <p>¹² After this he went down to Capernaum with his mother and brothers and his disciples. There they stayed for a few days.</p> <p>John 19:25-27</p> <p>²⁵ Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶ When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, “Woman,^[a] here is your son,” ²⁷ and to the disciple, “Here is your mother.” From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.</p> <p><small>h. John 2:6 - Or from about 75 to about 115 liters.</small></p>			

Reflections

Mary had a blessed relationship with Elizabeth. What women are in your life with whom you can share and be totally transparent and honest?

Describe a time when your faith and trust in God was at its highest. How did that time impact you and others?

