

MARY, THE RELATIVE

Our lesson idea comes from Luke 1:36-37: “Even Elizabeth your relative (he suggenis / female relative) is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. For nothing is impossible with God.”

The question we need to ask is “how were they related?” Elizabeth is described as “the daughter of Aaron” in Luke 1:5 of the tribe of Levi. Most bible scholars place Mary in the tribe of Judah and the daughter of Heli through Nathan [son of David and Bathsheba] (1 Chron.3:5) based on Luke 3:23 and the phrase, “Jesus, being supposedly the son of Joseph, the son of Heli.”

“A more likely explanation, however, is that Matthew follows the line of Joseph (Jesus’ legal father), while Luke emphasizes that of Mary (Jesus’ blood relative). Although tracing a genealogy through the mother’s side was unusual, so was the virgin birth. Luke’s explanation here that Jesus was the son of Joseph, “so it was thought” (Luke 1:23), brings to mind his explicit virgin birth statement (Luke 1:34-35) and suggests the importance of the role of Mary in Jesus’ genealogy.” (NIV, Luke 3:28-38)

We know from Matt.1:1-17 that Joseph (the legal father of Jesus) was of the tribe of Judah through Solomon (Matt.1:3, 6, 16 – “Joseph, the husband of Mary”).

Is it possible that the connection was between Mary’s mother and Elizabeth? The fact that Elizabeth was much older than Mary suggests that Mary’s mother and Elizabeth may have been sisters. Thus making Mary a first cousin female relative (he suggenis).

This lesson will study four aspects of Mary, the Relative and how it applies to the plan of God.

1. This lesson reminds us how important it is to walk in fellowship with the Lord continuously.

“If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.” (1 John 1:6-7)

- Elizabeth’s walk is described in the following verses (Luke 1:17, 18, 36-37; 1:6, 58; 1:13, 25, 66, 76). “This is the way the Lord has dealt with me in the days when He looked with favor upon me, to take away my disgrace among men.” (Luke 1:25; 42-45)

“So be careful to do what the Lord your God has commanded you; do not turn aside to the right or to the left. Walk in all the way that the Lord your God has commanded you, so that you may live and prosper and prolong your days in the land that you will possess.” (Deut.5:32-33)

- Mary’s walk is described in (Luke 1:27, 34; 1:28, 30; 1:45). “Be it done to me according to your word.” (Luke 1:38)

“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.” (Col.3:23-24)

2. The two sisters from the tribe of Levi may never have understood how important their choices of marriage were to the plan of God.

How important was Elizabeth’s choice to marry Zechariah from the tribe of Levi and Mary’s mother’s choice to marry Heli from the tribe of Judah?

How important were the two children, John the Baptist and Jesus Christ, in fulfilling the hundreds of years of messianic prophecies?

How important is it for a believer to be spiritual before as well as in marriage? (1 Pet.3:1-7; 1 Cor.6:18-7:2)

How important is it for a believer to marry “in the lord?” (1 Cor.7:39-40; 2 Cor.6:14-16; Matt.1:20-25)

3. This lesson reminds us that God was doing enormous things behind the scene and how the doctrinal decisions of these women were connected to the plan of God.

“I desire to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart.” (Ps.40:8; Matt.26:39; Heb.10:5-7)

Elizabeth just wanted a child but God wanted the prophetic forerunner of His Son (Luke 1:13-17, 24-25).

Mary just wanted to marry Joseph and have his children but wanted her to conceive as a virgin and give birth to the Son of God, Immanuel (Luke 1:31-35; Matt.1:18-23).

“For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.” (Rom.5:6) “The appointed time in God’s redemptive plan.”) (NIV) **(1 John 4:14; Eph.1:9-10)**

4. The relationships in Mary’s life will teach us how walking by faith is a series of small steps more than big leaps.

“For we walk (peripateo / p.a.ind 1pl) by faith, not by sight.” (2 Cor.5:7)

“And Mary said, ‘Behold, the bond-slave of the Lord; be it done to me according to your word.’ And the angel departed from her.” (Luke 1:38) **The word of God is now in Mary’s hands and not in Gabriel’s.**

“But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, in order that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.” (Gal.4:4-5)

How difficult will it become for Mary to keep this word from God in her hands? (Matt.1:18-19; 2:13-18; 19-23) “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the men of old gained approval.” (Heb.11:1-2)

Our faith does not rest in people, circumstances, things, or details of life for fulfillment but “faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.” (Rom.10:17) The object of faith is its working object. “Faith in what?” **“Be it done to me according to your word.”** (Luke 1:38)

HEARING
(Rom.10:17)

COMPLETING
(James 2:22)

BELIEVING
(Heb.4:2)

APPLYING
(2 Cor.5:7)