

## **January 2–8. Matthew 1; Luke 1: “Be It unto Me according to Thy Word”**

### Prophecies About Mary

About 700 BC Isaiah tells that “a virgin shall conceive” and give birth to our Savior

Isaiah 7:14

14 Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

About 600 BC Nephi gives us a similar prophecy stating that the mother of Christ “was exceedingly fair and white”

1 Nephi 11:13,20-21

13 And it came to pass that I looked and beheld the great city of Jerusalem, and also other cities. And I beheld the city of Nazareth; and in the city of Nazareth I beheld a virgin, and she was exceedingly fair and white.

20 And I looked and beheld the virgin again, bearing a child in her arms.

21 And the angel said unto me: Behold the Lamb of God, yea, even the Son of the Eternal Father!...

About 124 BC Mosiah specifies that the name of the mother of Christ will be Mary

Mosiah 3:8

8 And he shall be called Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Father of heaven and earth, the Creator of all things from the beginning; and his mother shall be called Mary.

### Angel Appears to Zacharias

We are given a little background about Zacharias’ priesthood duties

Luke 1:5-10

5 ¶ There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judæa, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth.

6 And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

7 And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years.

8 And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest’s office before God in the order of his course,

9 According to the custom of the priest’s office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord.

10 And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense.

What priesthood duty did Zacharias have to opportunity to perform at this time that allowed him to be in the temple?

(his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord)

James E. Talmage

"It was a very solemn occasion in the life of the humble Judean priest—this one day in his life on which the special and particularly sacred service was required of him.... As Zacharias ministered within the Holy Place, the people without bowed themselves in prayer, watching for the clouds of incense smoke to appear above the great partition which formed the barrier between the place of general assembly and the Holy Place, and awaiting the reappearance of the priest and his pronouncement of the benediction."  
(Jesus the Christ, pg. 76)

It seems that this was a once in a lifetime opportunity

Note that all the faithful were praying outside the temple while Zacharias performed this sacred ordinance

Also note the righteousness of Zacharias and Elisabeth

(they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless)

While in the Holy Place performing his priestly duties an angel appeared to him

Luke 1:11-17

11 And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense.

12 And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.

13 But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.

14 And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth.

15 For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.

16 And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God.

17 And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

What did the angle prophesy about John?

(many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God  
he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias... to make ready a people prepared for the Lord)

Carl W. Buehner

“John the Baptist was one of the most distinguished of God's servants. That he found favor with the Lord is emphasized in the Angel Gabriel's appearance in the temple to his father, Zacharias, promising him that he and his wife were to have a son who should 'be great in the sight of the Lord.'.... He was an Elias in that he was a forerunner of Jesus. He vigorously preached the gospel of repentance to the Jews....

“John faithfully prepared the way for Jesus' mission..... He stands with Adam, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Joseph Smith as trusted and true servants to whom the Lord committed a dispensation of the gospel. He suffered death as a martyr and was beheaded through the trickery of the wicked Herodias. Like many of the servants of God, he sealed his testimony with his blood.” (CR, April 1960)

D&C 84:28

For he was baptized while he was yet in his childhood, and was ordained by the angel of God at the time he was eight days old unto this power, to overthrow the kingdom of the Jews, and to make straight the way of the Lord before the face of his people, to prepare them for the coming of the Lord, in whose hand is given all power

Luke 1:18-20

18 And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years.

19 And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings.

20 And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season.

Why was Zacharias struck dumb (and deaf as we shall see)?

(because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled)

But all of this must have been overpowering for Zacharias:  
Temple, angel, son, the Elias, promised Christ

Who is the angel Gabriel?

Joseph Smith

“Noah, who is Gabriel,... stands next in authority to Adam in the Priesthood; he was called of God to this office.” (HC 3:386)

Angel Appears to Mary

The angel Gabriel tells Mary that she is to be the mother of Jesus

Luke 1:26-33

26 And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth,  
27 To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.  
28 And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.  
29 And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.  
30 And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.  
31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.  
32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:  
33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

What was Mary chosen to do?

Erastus Snow

“The New Testament tells us that God sent his angel to visit this beautiful Virgin Mary, and to make known unto her that she was chosen of the Lord to be the Mother of Jesus who should be the Savior of this people. And the messenger or the angel sent to her was designed to prepare her mind, her heart and her faith for this great work unto which the Lord had chosen her.”  
(JD, 19:266)

Christ would have a mortal mother and an immortal Father

Bruce R. McConkie

“It was because of this... intermixture of the divine and the mortal in one person, that our Lord was able to work out the infinite and eternal atonement. Because God was his Father and Mary was his mother, he had power to live or to die, as he chose, and having laid down his life, he had power to take it again, and then, in a way incomprehensible to us, to pass on the effects of that resurrection to all men so that all shall rise from the tomb.” (The Promised Messiah, pg. 471)

Mary's response

Luke 1:34-38

34 Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?  
35 And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing

which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

36 And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren.

37 For with God nothing shall be impossible.

38 And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

What was Mary's response to the message from the angel?

(Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word)

Neal A. Maxwell

"The marvelous, spiritually submissive Mary likewise expressed it (true submissiveness) in few words. Though filled with wonderment about the miraculous impending birth of Jesus, she said, 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word.'

"Her words can guide us when we too are puzzled by what is impending or unfolding in our lives." (Sermons Not Spoken, pg. 8-9)

L. Whitney Clayton

"Mary humbly responded that she would do what God asked, without demanding to know specifics and undoubtedly in spite of having countless questions about the implications for her life. She committed herself without exactly understanding why He was asking that of her or how things would work out. She accepted God's word unconditionally and in advance, with little knowledge of what lay ahead. With simple trust in God, Mary said, 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word.'" (CR, April 2017)

Why do you think Gabriel told Mary about Elisabeth?

James E. Talmage

"It was natural that Mary... should seek companionship... in whom she could confide, from whom she might hope to derive comfort and support.... Her heavenly visitant had indeed suggested all this in his mention of Elisabeth, Mary's cousin, herself a subject of unusual blessing, and a woman through whom another miracle of God had been wrought." (Jesus the Christ, pg. 82)

Mary Visits Elizabeth

Mary and Elizabeth rejoice together

Luke 1:39-45

39 And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Juda;

40 And entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth.  
41 And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost:  
42 And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.  
43 And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?  
44 For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy.  
45 And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord.

What did Elisabeth experience as soon as she heard Mary's salutation?

(when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost)

James E. Talmage

"There was mutual joy in the meeting between Mary the youthful virgin, and Elisabeth, already well advanced in life. From what of Gabriel's words her husband had communicated, Elisabeth must have known that the approaching birth of her son would soon be followed by that of the Messiah.... When Mary's salutation fell upon her ears, the Holy Ghost bore witness that the chosen mother of the Lord stood before her in the person of her cousin." (Jesus the Christ, pg. 83)

Also the unborn John who, as told to Zacharias would be full of the Holy Ghost from the womb, recognized Mary.

Luke 1:46-50

46 And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord,  
47 And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.  
48 For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.  
49 For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name.  
50 And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation.

What do we learn about Mary's humility from these verses?

(he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden  
he that is mighty hath done to me great things  
his mercy is on them that fear him)

Ezra Taft Benson

"Mary, the mother of our Savior, was of most modest circumstances, yet she knew well her responsibility and took joy in it. Remember her humble exclamation to her cousin Elisabeth: 'He hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me

blessed. Her strength was inward, not from outward material things. (CR, Oct. 1981)

What personal promise did Mary receive at this time?

(all generations shall call me blessed)

Bruce R. McConkie

“No woman has ever been held in higher esteem by the true saints than the mother of their Lord; and even among apostate peoples—false and delusive though it be—praise, reverence, adulation, and even supposed worship are bestowed upon her.” (“Doctrinal New Testament Commentary”, Volume 1)

We read that Elisabeth was 6 months into her pregnancy when Mary came to visit. Luke 1:56 states that Mary was with Elisabeth 3 months (which would put Elisabeth at full term), and then went home.

Joseph’s Vision

Joseph’s genealogy shows that he was a direct descendent of king David

Matt 1:16-17

16 And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

17 So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations.

Why is it significant that Joseph was a direct decedent of king David?

James E. Talmage

"Two genealogical records purporting to give the lineage of Jesus are found in the New Testament, one in the first chapter of Matthew, the other in the third chapter of Luke....

"Luke's record is regarded by many, however, as the pedigree of Mary, while Matthew's is accepted as that of Joseph. The all important fact to be remembered is that [Jesus] would be born in the royal line....

"Had Judah been a free and independent nation, ruled by her rightful sovereign, Joseph the carpenter would have been her crowned king; and his lawful successor to the throne would have been Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." (Jesus the Christ, pg. 85-87)

Then Mary returned from visiting Elizabeth her condition must have been obvious

Matt 1:18-25

18 ¶ Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.

19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily

20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

22 Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,

23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

24 Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife:

25 And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS

What did Joseph feel he must do before the angel appeared to him?

Break off the engagement

James E. Talmage

“Now the Jewish law provided for the annulment of a betrothal in either of two ways -- by public trial and judgment, or by private agreement attested by a written document signed in the presence of witnesses. Joseph was a just man, a strict observer of the law, yet no harsh extremist; moreover he loved Mary and would save her all unnecessary humiliation, whatever own sorrow and suffering. For Mary's sake he dreaded the thought of publicity; and therefore determined to have the espousal annulled with such privacy as the law allowed. He was troubled and thought much of his duty in the matter.”  
(Jesus the Christ, pg. 79)

Both Mary and Joseph are told to name the child Jesus.

This corresponds to the prophecy of Isaiah

### John's Mission

Zacharias' tongue was loosed as soon as he declared that his newborn son was to be named John. He prophesied about John's mission

Luke 1:76-80

76 And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways;

77 To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins,

78 Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath



visited us,

79 To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

80 And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel.

What would John accomplish?

(thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways  
give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins)

What was John given in abundance so that he could complete his great mission?

(waxed strong in spirit)

Early we read that John was “filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother’s womb.”

Robert J. Matthews

"As John grew to maturity, the Holy Ghost prepared the young man's mind for his ministry. John received the Holy Ghost while he was in his mother's womb, and no one can receive the Holy Ghost without receiving revelation.... Later [he] received the full keys of the Aaronic Priesthood, including the keys of the ministering of angels. It follows that he would have received the visitation of angels during these preparatory years....

"The training of this great Elias required the finest spiritual education possible and included study of the scriptures, lessons in Israel's history, the workings and revelations of the Holy Ghost, and the ministry of angels. When John came forth preaching at the age of thirty, he was ready. He knew what his mission was and what he was to do, and he had the authority to go about it." ("The Ministry of John the Baptist," Ensign, Jan. 1991)