

The TESTIMONY of

Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word; it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed." Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word; it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed."

GEORGE N.H. PETERS

edited by

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First Edition

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Editors Notes

In many ways, the Testimony of Luke, representing the third transcription in a series taken from the handwritten Bible Study notes of the Rev. George N. H. Peters, has been the most difficult to compile for two main reasons.

One, the first 100 pages of the text were unavailable until about a year into the project. Even after these pages had miraculously appeared, the Author's preface and notes remain missing.

Second, the author changes format from chapter to chapter making it difficult at times to follow his line of reasoning.

Like the previous "Testimony" books, we have separated most of the Biblical references from the body into footnotes for readability.

One aspect we couldn't address was Peter's study notes on Luke appear to have been written after Matthew and Mark (and before John). As a result, the author regularly refers the reader to these two previous studies on numerous key passages. Unfortunately, Peter's study notes from Matthew and Mark have yet to be discovered (assuming they still exist).

This doesn't diminish his insights into the Gospel of Luke because the author intentionally comments on only those passages that are unique to Luke's Gospel that support the main tenant of his work.

The author's main purpose is to reveal the Messiah of covenant and prophecy, Jesus of Nazareth (or, as Peter once said, the "Son of the Living God"). In order to accomplish this task Peters cites numerous 'errors' in key texts regarding the interpretation of Scripture.

As editors we are not at liberty to dispute the author's claims. Clearly, during his lifetime, following the publishing of his major treatise "The Theocratic Kingdom" in 1884, Peters received a considerable amount of censure from his Christian Brethren. The unexpected contempt of a work that is even today still regarded as the "most exhaustive study on the Kingdom of God ever written" must have come as quite a shock to the Author. The voluminous

The Testimony of Luke

study notes, hand written over the last two decades of his life, were never published.

Having read the bulk of these notes we feel the study notes were written in part to defend his previous work by methodically and meticulously walking the reader through the Gospels and Epistles, point by point, demonstrating their Divine unity and purpose.

The result is quite remarkable considering they were written over 100 years ago, at a critical junction in the history of the Church, the late 1800's, when 'Spiritualism' and the 'Higher Criticism' were beginning to impact the daily "walk" of the Believer.

Peters writes to warn of their negative influence on Scriptural interpretation, an unnecessary obfuscation of what he asserts is the otherwise clear grammatical sense of the word.

And so it is, as the texts are carefully and lovingly unfolded in this manner, the reader is suddenly confronted with Jesus, the Messiah of Scripture (OT and NT), the Messiah of covenant and prophecy, all-powerful, alive, standing at future's door, fully able to accomplish every promise God ever made to mankind.

We believe this is what drove the Rev. Peters to compile these study notes and this is why we believe they are even more important today, a century later.

Dennis Baltuskonis and Pamela Baltuskonis, 2020.

The Editors

Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1:1–25	1
CHAPTER 1:26–38	24
CHAPTER 1:39–56	42
CHAPTER 1:57–66	52
CHAPTER 1:67–80	55
CHAPTER 2	69
CHAPTER 3	112
CHAPTER 4	120
CHAPTER 5:1–39	144
CHAPTER 6:1–49	147
CHAPTER 7:1–50	151
CHAPTER 8:1–56	162
CHAPTER 9:1–62	164
CHAPTER 10:1–42	170
CHAPTER 11:1–54	199
CHAPTER 12	215
CHAPTER 13:1–35	243
CHAPTER 14:1–35	275
CHAPTER 15:1–32	295
CHAPTER 16:1–31	323
CHAP 17: 1–37	374
CHAPTER 19:1– 48	419
CHAPTER 20: 1– 47	444
CHAPTER 21:1–38	445
CHAPTER 22:1–71	462
CHAPTER 23:1–56	488

The Testimony of Luke

CHAPTER 24: 1- 53.....	514
APPENDIX A IMPORTANT TRUTHS THAT LUKE'S GOSPEL TEACHES.....	533
APPENDIX B: EXCURSUS.....	555

Chapter 1:1–25

The introduction given by Luke.

“Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word; it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed.”

No variations are found in the authoritative (Greek) manuscripts, but the (English) renderings are numerous, as follows.

“In as much as (or, since) many have undertaken to draw up a narrative (or, prepare a narration of history) concerning those matters (or, of those facts) which have been fulfilled (or, fully established) among us, as those handed down to us, who, from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word; It seemed good to me also having learned perfectly all things from the beginning, (or, having searched out diligently all things from the beginning), to write unto thee in consecutive order (or, from point to point), most noble (or, honorable) Theophilus, that thou mayest accurately know the certainty of the words (or, doctrines, or, accounts) wherein thou was instructed (or, concerning which thou hast been taught, or, catechized).”

Some perversions exist regarding Luke’s gospel.

1. The gospel is Luke’s own production, uninspired, because it is the result of his personal diligence, study, and research.

Ans: Luke’s inspiration was twofold. He was inspired to undertake the work and then aided, directed, and impressed by the Spirit to perform it. In that period of the Church’s history, in order to supply a need, the Holy Spirit, so liberally given to others in behalf of the interests of the Church, would specially mark and aid Luke’s pen taken up to present the facts so fundamental to Christian faith and

The Testimony of Luke

hope. In the production of such a gospel, with the aim in view, there evidently would be a special realization of the promise recorded in John 14:26; 16:13,14 and referred to in 1John 2:20,27.

In view of Luke's intimate association and ministry with the apostles, he undoubtedly was among those (like Stephen, Philip, Barnabas, Apollos and many others) who were filled with and qualified by the Spirit to perform their mission.

This Gospel was prepared in the lifetime of the apostles, under their sanction, as supplying a need. It was readily received, fully endorsed and accredited, by the apostles as containing the Divine truth.

The contents are of a nature, including much new material (e.g. various Parables) minutely given, the presentation of subjects and precise language used, etc., as to impress the fact that a Divine revelation and guidance alone explain their record.

The full and accurate agreement with the other Gospels as to facts, language employed, predictions given, the absence of eulogy, and the simplicity of narration, all evidence a superintending Divine inspiration.

Inspiration is consistent with the cooperative use of human faculties, with diligence, preparation, and study. God may select the person to be the especially guided and aided because of the possession of personal peculiarities and qualifications that can be utilized. The Supernatural uses the natural, the powers possessed by man, as an agency by which to present the truth, purely and without error.

The very fact that Luke is silent respecting his inspiration, confirms it, because not one of the New Testament writers directly, unless Paul be regarded an exception, claim and affirm immediate Divine inspiration. The truths recorded, owned and blessed by the Holy Spirit, with its practical results upon the heart and life, indicate the Divine origin and supervision.

2. It is alleged that Luke is a mere compiler or copyist.

Ans: As Luke gives the facts in the history of Jesus at the First Advent, there must be of necessity, if he gives a faithful record, great

similarity to the other Gospels. For the facts are the same, and a truthful representation of events occurring works done, language employed, most largely reproduce or present what other writers likewise record. Such simplicity is not evidence of compiling or copying, but of truthfulness and full accord with other inspired writers.

The addition of much entirely new material, the record of new miracles and Parables, the numerous changes of words and phraseology, the augmentation of details, all confirm Luke's independence in the production of this gospel.

The individuality of Luke as a writer, distinct from others, is impressed by the peculiarity of his style, employing a purer Greek, and thus evidencing his learning and natural ability. This superiority of style appears in the introduction (or Preface), and continues through the entire Gospel.

3. It is inferred that, because "Theophilus" means a "friend, or, lover of God," Luke did not refer to some one particular person, but to any and every man who is a "lover of God."

Ans: The most natural and reasonable construction is, that Luke refers to some individual thus named. This is supported by the designation "most noble," or "most excellent," which indicates, not moral character but, higher official and honorable position, and is thus used by Paul (Acts 23:26; 24:3; 26:25) to honor the official station of Felix and Festus. It is therefore, expressive of the rank of the person thus addressed.

The fact that the precise person, thus called and honored, (whether Roman or Greek or Jew) cannot be determined is owing to the extreme conciseness of Gospel history, which does not enter into details or explanations.

4. The expression "ministers of the word" is made to mean "ministers of the logos or the word," i.e. of the Divine personal Christ.

Ans: It is self-evident, as numerous interpreters have stated, that Luke does not use "word" or "logos," in the same sense as employed

by John, but it here simply denotes the Gospel, or the word concerning the Christ, which these ministers proclaimed.

5. It is claimed in the interest and defense of the practice of Catechization, that here we have the use of a regular and systematic catechetical instruction directly referred, and hence its early origin portrayed.

Ans: This is inferentially placed upon the word rendered “instructed,” which is the word from whence our word “catechize” is derived from; and, therefore, is not directly deducible.

Whatever may be the value or desirableness of Catechetical instruction preceding or following Church connection, it cannot be derived from Luke’s language, and for two reasons; the verb, rendered “instructed” or “catechized,” does not follow in the NT its strict classical meaning (viz: to sound, ring, resound, or stun), but simply means to teach or to instruct, with an implied latent idea of oral teaching. It is only used a few times (Acts 18:25; 21:21, 24; Rom 2:18; 1Cor 14:19; Gal 6:6), and in every instance conveys the idea of teaching, or of being taught or, informed, without adding to it the notion of a regular catechetical teaching, or course of instruction received.

Such an assumed course of Catechetic is not sustained by the history of the Apostolic Church. In that day of persecution and trial, a brief oral instruction and an expressed acceptance of and faith in the same, was followed by an immediate reception into the Church. Regular or protracted Catechization followed later on, and was specially brought out in the 3rd, 4th, and 5th centuries.

The direct teaching.

That Luke writes this Gospel is confirmed by the uniform testimony of the early Church Fathers. Inspiration does not set aside (or override) Luke’s natural faculties, but uses and controls them in behalf of the truth. Investigation, examination of evidence, study of matter presented by the apostles, mental activity and requirements, are all utilized and subordinated by the Spirit that constituted him an Evangelist and preacher of the Christ.

The expression, “many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration” (or rather, “to draw up a narrative”), suggests the following; If the Gospels of Matthew and Mark were written, this word “many” indicates, that other writings, relating to the history of the church, were circulated.

It is highly probable that the large number of these were merely fragmentary, stating a few facts, or recording some of the miracles, parables, without attempting a connected historical narration, extending from the birth to the ascension of the Christ. This seems to be confirmed, by Luke’s reference to his own production as a more complete and connected narrative, resulting from his having traced the course of events or happenings from the first.

We must not conclude, as some have done, that Luke implies the imperfection or unreliability of these “many” efforts. He rather implies their reliability as testimonies, and his desire to add force to the same by a more detailed, and related, statement. The fact that manuscripts were used, and to multiply them required the slow process of copying by hand, no doubt, influenced Luke to enter this field, and aid in supplying a growing need by a connected record of events. The Spirit of God that abode with Luke as an Evangelist led him to this, as the result shows.

It is, therefore, merely arbitrary to refer these “many” to the spurious or Apocryphal Gospels, because the former existed in the days of the apostles, and the latter were the production of a later period.

The truthfulness of the record and the faithfulness of the details given, are established by two things; the assured testimony of living “eyewitnesses and ministers of the word,” and the personal knowledge and inspired leading of these witnesses, causing the immediate reception, endorsement, and circulation of this gospel. The gospel is represented as a result or outcome of Apostolic teaching, virtually and truly containing the facts that the Apostles presented relating to the Christ.

The great modesty of Luke is evident. Although highly favored, there is no boasting, no effort to exalt himself above brethren, no lowering of other men’s labors to elevate his own by comparison, no appeal

The Testimony of Luke

to his Divine guidance. His conduct in this respect is widely different from that of many who have followed him, and in attempting to interpret his Gospel, do it boastfully and with claims of special guidance and enlightenment, by the Holy Spirit. The sad fact is as history painfully attests, the greater the imposition, the louder and more profuse the claims of sanctity, inspiration, and superiority.

Luke proposes to follow a consecutive, but not strictly chronological, order of the events pertaining to the Christ. That he does this is apparent from the reading, for he gives in regular order, (1) things preceding and associated with the birth of the Messiah; (2) the birth of the Messiah and his growth; (3) the testimony borne to the Christ by John, Genealogy, temptation, works, teaching; (4) the various journeyings and events connected with them; (5) the preparation for death, revelations, trial, condemnation, death, resurrection, and ascension.

Even in his introduction, Luke impresses upon us the idea, that the Gospel is a compilation of facts, historically occurring in behalf of redemption. This is emphasized by John (1John 1:1–3), and gives us the most solid ground for faith and hope to rest on, owing to their reality and enduring nature. The acceptance of them, and faith in them, evidence to every believer their reality and power by the transforming influence that they exert upon the heart and the life.

The inferential teaching.

The word “many” suggests, (1) the deep interest that early believers took in the Christ; (2) the faith and hope that the Gospel inspired; (3) the manifested desire to reach and interest others.

God raises up and provides His instrumentalities as need requires. He does this without destroying a self-conscious intelligence agency, which cooperates with the Holy Spirit. In religion God utilizes human faculties much more when composing Gospel history, i.e. to form the foundation of Christian faith and hope. Natural abilities, with a cultivated mind, when consecrated to God and sanctified, enlarge usefulness.

Luke selected and addressed Theophilus for his instruction and edification, confirming his faith and hope in the Gospel and

evidently, to secure a patron of high standing and means to publish the gospel by multiplication of copies. For in that day the slow and costly process of writing could only produce copies.

It almost seems, as if the introduction was a letter to Theophilus, which Luke appended to the Gospel as explanatory, when the copies were made.

The continued preservation of Luke, and the loss (excepting Matthew and Mark, if then written, and afterward John) of the “many” undertaken narratives, shows the Divine estimate and preference accorded to Luke’s that the Gospel of Luke contains all of importance, presented in these fragmentary records.

Luke and the three Gospels are given to support and supplement each other, adding strength to the separate statements by a united and harmonious testimony given. Two witnesses are legal and satisfactory, but four are produced to honor the Christship of Jesus. Considering four as a sacred number (as e.g. in the four beasts, four living creatures of Ezekiel and Revelation), it is God’s providentially designed testimony made sure to the world.

There was no mere “mechanical inspiration,” that operated upon Luke as a machine. Luke was an intelligent and willing agent, employing his faculties in carrying out the Divine will, and the Spirit cooperated with them for secure accuracy, to bring things to his remembrance, to impress acts and teaching, to show what was done and what language was used, and to guide him in the choice of words and phraseology.

He was not an eyewitness, so unless we concede the inspiration of Luke, it is impossible to account for his exact agreement with the other evangelists, considering the large number of facts presented.

Luke had the assured testimony of “eyewitnesses,” and of inspired men to substantiate his facts, therefore, we may safely dismiss the alleged ‘higher knowledge’ of unbelief which seeks to eliminate the Supernatural from them.

It is the privilege and duty of all believers to study all these facts, to investigate their meaning and their relation to Redemption. Such

The Testimony of Luke

study leads to a higher estimate of the Christ, to stronger faith and to an increased hope. The expressions used in this introduction, caution us to place faith only in well-attested facts, by which freedom from error is secured. We are, therefore, invited to make careful investigation and examination.

While a historical statement of the facts in the life of Jesus, is an absolute necessity in order to evidence His Christship, atoning death, etc., yet the reception of such facts without an appropriating faith, leading to a practical influence upon heart and life, will do us no good. Indeed, mere reception alone is condemnatory.

The very fact that Luke introduces much material not recorded in the other Gospels, such as nine miracles, nineteen parables, indicates not only his diligence but also the directing hand of God.

The name of "Theophilus," i.e. "lover or friend of God," indicates the kind of Bible student, who is duly benefited and edified by the great facts recorded by Luke. It is right and proper, as Paul also did, to give civil rulers or persons in honorary stations, even if unworthy, their proper titles and honor their office.

The announcement of John's birth, vs 5–17.

"There was in the days of Herod, the King of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia; and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless. And they had no child, because that Elizabeth was barren, and they were both now well stricken in years. And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course, according to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. And the whole multitude of the people were praying without, at the time of incense. And there appeared and him an angel of the Lord, standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said unto him, fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elizabeth, shall

bear thee a son and thou shalt call his name John. And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. 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. And many of the children of Israel shall be turned to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him and 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".

No important variations exist among the Greek MSS.

The different renderings worthy of consideration are the following: in v5 for "Abia," read "Abijah"; and substitute "he had a wife of." In v6, for "before," some read "in the sight of," and others "in the presence of," and others, "in the eyes of". In v7, for "well stricken," read, "far advanced in years." In v17, for "go before him" some read "go before in the presence of him"; others, "appear beforehand"; others "first in his sight"; others, "go before his face"; and for "disobedient to the wisdom"; read, in place of "to," "by" of "to walk in."

Some interpretative perversions exist.

1. That what appeared to Zacharias as an angel, he saw only in a vision or, trance, that no angel personally was present.

Ans: This is utterly opposed to the facts given; the angel was named; the agitation and fear of Zacharias; the announcement made; the dumbness inflicted and the ultimate fulfillment. The whole matter falls into line with the Divine purpose relating to the Messiah.

This perversion is based upon a denial of the Supernatural and the existence of angels. The Supernatural is the golden thread running through the whole Bible; beginning with it, permeating it, and ending with it. It is the feature that alone bestows faith and hope in a completed deliverance from evil, the removal of an entailed curse, and the bestowment of sadly needed and earnestly desired blessings.

The Bible affirms the existence of angels and states that they are employed in carrying out the Divine will. Aside from the Scriptural statement, the fact can only be decided by testimony or human experience. The person(s) who later pervert or, objects were not present at the time; therefore, we prefer to take the testimony of Zacharias.

As a decided preference, we also accept of the experiences of Abraham, lot, Israel, Elijah, Elisha, Daniel, Paul, John, in place of the mere assumptions of unbelief. Angels never appear, unless to sub serve some important matter, and in their appearance and mission honor the dignity and majesty of the High One whom they serve.

2. That the Angel's announcement declares the conversion of the nation, which is flatly contradicted by Luke 7:30–35.

Ans: The Angel does not assert the conversion of the nation, he carefully and guardedly employs the word “many” and repeats it. He does not even intimate a vast multitude or a majority of the nation, but simply “many.” This measure of success is attributed to John's mission, which prepared “many” to receive and believe in Jesus as the Christ.

3. That John is really Elijah predicted by Malachi 4:5,6.

Ans: Luke does not say that John is Elijah, but that he comes “in the spirit and power of Elijah,” i.e. like Elijah when he comes. John, filled with the Spirit, certainly knew whom he was, and when he was asked (John 1:21), “Art thou Elijah? And he said, I am not.” This ought to be decisive.¹

The direct teaching. The time of occurrence.

“In the days of Herod, King of Judea.” It is deeply significant, that when the Roman Empire (Daniel's 4th beast) was in the height of its power, and as yet undivided, then God brings forth Him, the king of the Jews, who should be the cause of the ultimate downfall of Gentile domination.

¹ Compare the notes Matthew 17:11,12, and Mark 9:11,12,13.

This took place when the nation was in bondage under the crushing power of the mighty empire, and when the leaders of the nation were sunken in formalism and sin.

It was about 400 years from Malachi, that God had not given a direct revelation. But now when His own Son is to appear, He again mercifully condescends to bestow revelations.

In the Divine estimation and purpose, the time had now come for the promise of a 'Seed' to Abraham (Gal 3:16), and of an illustrious Son to David (Acts 2:30) to be verified by actual realization. Hence in point of exact time, John has the precedence of birth, because he was to be a forerunner, having a preparatory mission.

The descent of the priest and his wife, v5.

John was born not only of pious parents, but had a priestly descent, on both sides, and hence had an ancestry highly distinguished and illustrious. He was purposely chosen in this line in order to give weight and authority to his utterances. This was designedly done, in order that the priestly might be allied in support of the claim of the royal descent of Jesus. It was eminently fitting that the two should thus be harmoniously manifested.

Zacharias was in one of the 24 courses (or, classes), each one of which by rotation officiated for a week (1Chron 9:15). Being in the class of Abijah, he belonged to the 8th regular order.²

The high praise bestowed on Zacharias and his wife, v6.

They were righteous, obedient to God's requirements, and blameless. Being sheltered under the atoning blood of God's ordinances, they enjoyed Divine forgiveness and favor. Thus righteous, God now bestows upon them a special and striking manifestation of His favor.

If we ponder the statement in v7 we find the Supernatural necessitated by the promise that follows. Owing to their advanced age and childless condition, humanly speaking, under natural law

² 1Chron 24:10; 2Chron 8:14.

there was no possibility of their being blessed with a child. And, like Isaac, a direct supernatural intervention and aid removed all hindrances, and enabled a Divine promise to be realized.

As the birth of the Messiah, it was fitting also, but in a lower measure, that the Supernatural attend the birth of the forerunner. This demonstrates how all the various parts relating to the development of Redemption, are rooted and grounded in the Supernatural.

While engaged in the service of God, vs 8-9, and in the discharge of his duties, Zacharias is flavored with a rich, desired personal blessing. Zacharias is in the holy place to offer incense, the multitude in the outer courts are, v10, engaged in worship by silent prayer.

“At the time of incense”. Incense was a symbol of acceptable prayer.³ Supplication at the time of burning was deemed suitable and acceptable. The special incense used and ordered by Divine appointment, was composed of four ingredients, and was only lawfully used in the Temple service.⁴

The appearance of the Angel, v11.

It was “an angel of the Lord.” Meaning either, **belonging to God**, (for they are “God’s host,” the “heavenly host,” “Angels of God”. “Sons of God” (his creation)); or **sent by God**; or, both ideas.

Angels exist, because God honors and glorifies himself by their creation. They exalt the majesty of God’s throne by their numbers and powers. God desires creatures to exist in order to enjoy blessedness and glory. He employs them as instruments to carry out his will.

The narrative plainly shows this was a real personal appearance. Zacharias was not deceived as the results are conclusive evidence.

³ See Rev 5:8; 8:3, 4; Psalms 141:2.

⁴ Compare Exodus 30:7–9, 34–38.

Note this angel appeared **“standing on the right side of the altar of incense.”** The position is significant.

This (golden) altar stood in the holy place, **“before the veil that is by the ark of the testimony,”** (Exod 30:6; 60:5). It occupied a place of special distinction and honor. Hence to appear at the right side of this altar indicates, the rank and authority of the Divine messenger, that prayer (symbolized by the altar) was Divinely acceptable, and that a favorable response to prayer offered, was now to be accorded and in a remarkable manner.

Nothing is said of the personal appearance of the angel, or of his raiment, but from Zacharias recognition of angelic nature, and from his agitation and fear, he must have presented a splendid and majestic appearance.

The effect that this appearance produced, v12.

Zacharias was filled with awe and fear. Sudden and unexpected, face to face with an angel of high rank, his composure and courage failed him.

The address of the Angel, vs13–17.

The encouragement given: “Fear not, Zacharias”. Without introduction, the Angel names him to inspire confidence, and assures him that his own presence was not a harbinger of evil, but of blessing.

“Thy prayer is heard,” the angel tells him.

From the immediate context, it follows that reference is made to Zechariah prayer for offspring, it being considered a reproach, or an evil, by the Jews to die childless and not perpetuate the name. This evidently refers to past prayer, repeated as an earnest desire during a married life, and now exhibiting itself in regret that he was not favored.

For ought we know, Zechariah, believing all things possible with God, even yet, despite the advanced years of himself and wife, had faith, that if such was God’s pleasure, he could yet be favored. If the

latter existed, like much prayer uttered, it was simply theoretic, for when the tender was made of actual realization, his faith gave place to doubt.

But we are not to limit his prayer exclusively to this personal matter. He was among those who (Ch. 2:38) **“looked for redemption in Jerusalem,”** and hence also prayed earnestly for the coming of the looked for Messiah. For the Angel unites the two by promising a Son and telling him that his son was to be the forerunner of the greatly desired Messiah.

This prayer answered, reminds us of the prayer of Abraham, and of the mothers of Samson and Samuel. God can do as it pleases Him, and show grace to him to whom He wills to show mercy.

“Thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son”. A direct exertion of Divine power shall remove her barrenness. The Might that can create, recreate, and raise from the dead, can readily fulfill this promise.

“Thou shalt call his name John”. Why particularly choose and designate the name John? The answer is twofold. To avoid is being called “Elijah,” and thus make an impression that he was the only Elijah contemplated by Malachi’s prophecy (Mal 4:5, 6), when in God’s ordering there are two forerunners; (one at the First Advent, the other at the Second Advent), whose mission would be exclusively to the Jews. Hence To distinguish these forerunners, one from the other, a distinctive separate name is selectively given to this son.

The name chosen is deeply significant of this act of Divine favor to Zacharias; for it’s Hebrew meaning is, “God is gracious”. Thus the name itself is a constant reminder of God’s Grace.

The angel announces, v14, that this son shall be to the parents a source of “joy and gladness,” arising from the near blood relationship, the honor conferred upon them, the important mission that he should perform, and the honorable station and office so near to the Messiah that he would occupy.

“Many shall rejoice at his birth”. That is, his living shall prove a blessing to others, leading them to repentance and God’s favor. While an honor to his family and friends, he is far more than this to his fellow men in the benefits conferred.

“He shall be great in the sight of the Lord,” v15, eminent, and distinguished as a preacher of righteousness, being the forerunner of God’s own dear son. John was not great in the sight of the Pharisees or rulers⁵ or in that of Herod, who slew him. But he was great in God’s estimation, and that is decisive of true greatness.

John **“shall drink neither wine nor strong drink,”** v15.

“Strong drink,” are not our distilled spirits (then unknown), but fermented liquors derived from fruits, grain, honey, juice of the Palm, lees of wine, etc.

This was the Nazarite vow⁶ taken for a short (or long) period of time, and sometimes, as in the case of Samson and Samuel, imposed throughout life. But here the vow was not voluntary on John’s part (however willingly and cheerfully accepted), but a commanded, ordained conduct prescribed by God as a rule of life.

This vow was imposed for several reasons; to indicate the purity of John’s utterances, (Divinely derived), not stimulated by overindulgence.⁷ Preaching repentance, John was to be a striking example of sobriety, which served as a constant reminder of the mission in which he was engaged.

“Filled with the Holy Ghost.”

This indicates the distinguished honor (special Divine favor and blessing) bestowed upon John. It denotes, that he was inspired and guided by the Spirit, that he was supernaturally endowed and directed in his work, so that e.g. he readily recognized the Messiah and testified concerning Him.

⁵ Chapter 7:30.

⁶ Numbers 6:1-21.

⁷ Jesus refers to this feature in Matt 11:18.

“Even from his mother’s womb,” shown in v41, “the babe leaped in her womb” at the salutation of Mary, bearing the child Jesus in her womb; a Divine response proceeding from the Spirit. It was God’s design that he should be set apart, consecrated and fully fitted for his mission as the forerunner of the Messiah.

Being thus filled by the Spirit, the question arises, why did not John exhibit this fact by the performance of miracles? A little reflection tends to show, why miracles were withheld. The reason is implied in John 10:41,42. Being a mere forerunner of the Messiah, and miracles being designed as Messianic signs, John performed none lest his testimony concerning Jesus, as the Messiah, would be weakened by directing attention to himself, inviting undesirable comparisons, and exciting a factional spirit.

This son shall be instrumental, v16, in turning “many” to the Lord. Not the nation itself, not the mass of the nation, not the ruling power of the nation, for this is forbidden by the results of John’s mission⁸ and by the punishment inflicted upon the nation for its rejection both of the forerunner and the Messiah. The meaning is that a large number (“many”) would be thus converted.

One phrase in the verse deserves particular attention, in view of its important bearing upon a theory (“Anglo–Israelism”) largely advocated at the present time. Reference is made to the phrase, “the children of Israel”. It is contended, in the support of “Anglo–Israelism,” that only the ten tribes are designated “Israel,” while Judah and Benjamin alone compose the Jewish nation. That this is a gross mistake and violation of Scripture is readily seen by this verse.

John’s mission was not to the ten tribes, but to Judah, Benjamin (and probably a small portion of the other tribes amalgamated), and these two tribes are designated “the children of Israel,” (i.e. Israelites), because the descendants of Jacob or Israel. Compare the force of vs 54 and 68.

Such phraseology and application of the name “Israel,” alike to the two and the ten tribes accords with; the descent of both; the

⁸ Stated by Jesus himself, Luke 7:29–35.

covenanted relationship of both. Together (both) constitute the Jewish nation and both bear the name of their common father Jacob, changed to Israel⁹; both are Jews¹⁰; both retain during separation the Israeli status; both in reunion bear the same common name; both inherit the same promises; both have the same Messiah, “the King of Israel”; both formed the 12 tribes constituting one nation¹¹; both come within the election, including the whole nation; both come under prophecies descriptive of the destiny of the nation as a whole; both, while some predictions particularize between the two and ten tribes, fall under God’s withdrawal and God’s return; both are brought back to the same land, same restored city, Kingdom and reign; both stand related to the house of David; (p.) “both the houses of Israel” are identical with “the house of Jacob.”¹²

This son, v17, “shall go before Him”. The “Him” evidently refers to the preceding “the Lord their God.” So John was to go before, (or be the forerunner of) one who was also Divine, Lord and God.

Zacharias, after John’s birth, filled by the Spirit, specially declares, v76, John’s mission to “go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways.” This divinity and Lordship of the Messiah is constantly held forth in the Scriptures,¹³ Hence John, instructed and inspired by the Spirit, speaks of Jesus, the Messiah, in the most exalted terms.

“In the spirit and power of Elijah”¹⁴.

The works that he was to accomplish, v17, were multiple; to bring to the children the strong faith of the fathers; to bind the family relationship together by unity of faith; to cause the wicked to repent and entertain the wisdom of the righteous; and finally to prepare a people, who would gladly receive Jesus as the Messiah and their Lord.

⁹ Matthew 8:10; Acts 18:17; 21:28; Acts 22:3 with Rom 11:1.

¹⁰ Rom 3:9, 29; 10:12; 9:23,24; 2:9,10.

¹¹ Acts 26:7; 28:20; James 1:1.

¹² Isa 8:14.

¹³ Phil 2:6; Heb 1:3; John 1:1; 10:30; Isa 9:6; Col 1:15; 2:9; Rom 9:11; 1Tim 3:16; Jer 23:6; 2:36; Rev 1:8.

¹⁴ Compare the notes on Matt 17: 11, 12 and Mark 9:11–13.

Zacharias's unbelief and punishment, vs 18–23.

“And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years. And the angel answering, said unto him, I am Gabriel that stands in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to show thee these glad tidings. 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. And the people waited for Zacharias, and marveled that he tarried so long in the Temple. And when he came out, he could not speak unto them: and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the Temple; for he beckoned unto them and remained speechless. And it came to pass, that, as soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house.”

There are no variations among the leading Greek MSS.

There are a few, mainly verbal, different renderings. These are of little importance. One, more accurately agreeing with the Greek, may be observed in v18, some substituting for “well stricken in years,” the phrase, “far advanced in her days.”

There is only one significant perversion that requires notice. Because, v22, the word “vision” is used, some, unbelieving, conclude that no real appearance of an angel took place, but that all occurred in a trance or visionary dream.

Ans:

The word itself, as rendered in Ch. 24:23, Acts 26:19, includes the idea of seeing an appearance or apparition. The whole narrative impresses the reality of angelic appearance.

The Direct Teaching.

The unbelief of Zechariah, v18.

In view of his advanced age, and that of his wife, the announcement seemed incredible. It was opposed to the natural order of things.

The reply of the Angel.

“I am Gabriel”. Evidently the same angel that appeared to Daniel.¹⁵ This announcement must have awed Zacharias, as he well knew his great dignity and power from Daniel’s description of him.

Critics inform us, that the meaning of “Gabriel” is “man of God,” and Daniel designates him (Dan 9:21) “the man Gabriel.” This suggests that much more than mere appearance or assumed likeness, of a man, is intended; that Gabriel in some mysterious and unexplained manner sustains an abiding (glorified) relationship to humanity. But how, or to what extent, we cannot tell.

“That stood in the presence of God”, i.e. have an honorable nearness and position before God, highly favored and exalted.

“Am sent to speak into thee and to show thee these glad tidings.” Angels are not allowed to communicate personally with man, without Divine permission. Owing to their purity and holiness, they are far removed from fallen and struggling humanity, and certain limits are assigned to them to regulate direct intercourse. Interested and rejoicing in man’s salvation, ministering and aiding, yet these limits exclude visible personal interviews.

“Sent to speak” to the Zacharias is an act of special favor and honor, influenced by the relationship that it sustained to the Messiah. Showing the facility of the Angel to communicate with Zechariah, using the very language that Zechariah was familiar with demonstrates that angels have the gift of speaking and understanding languages.

The “glad tidings,” relate not merely to the birth of John but his mission as forerunner, his success in preparing a people to receive the Messiah.

“Thou shalt be dumb,” or, silent.

Some think, as the original word admits of the double reference, that Zechariah was both deaf and dumb during this period, and direct us

¹⁵ Dan 8:16; 9:21.

to v62, where deafness seems to be included, for it is said, “they made signs to the father.”

The astonishing power exhibited by this angel, instantly causing the faculty of speech to cease, and in all probability, also affecting the sense of hearing. We can well imagine the astonishment and consternation of Zacharias on perceiving the immediate result of a Supernatural ordering.

This silence was to continue, v20, only during a definite period of time, i.e. “until the day that these things shall be performed,”¹⁶

The unbelief of Zechariah-contd, v20.

Zacharias’s unbelief was inexcusable, because an angel made the announcement. His appearance and manner ought to have inspired immediate and implicit faith. The holy place of the sanctuary, and the time of prayer to God, ought to have influenced his faith.

The very prayers of Zacharias offered in the past, when they were to be realized, ought, (if unwaveringly persevered in an earnestly entertained), to have caused him to accept of the announcement without question.

The hesitation and questioning indicated, that while Zacharias believed theoretically in the might of God, that with Him all things are possible, yet practically he allowed himself to be swayed (v18) by the supposedly insurmountable difficulties interposed by natural law. Hence, inadvertently, he, for the time, makes natural law superior to the Creator and Upholder of the Law, and expresses it by a question of doubt.

This dumbness (probably also deafness), expressed two things:

Zacharias asked, “Whereby shall I know this?” The enforced silence is the answer. It is a sign, unwelcome and annoying, constantly present and reminding Zacharias that the announcement will surely be fulfilled.

¹⁶ See vs 63, 64.

But it bears with it a Divine judgment. Doubting, he is now in his person afflicted to show God's displeasure. For unbelief, in the face of God's messenger and Word, is derogatory to God's honor, power, and Majesty.

The people without waited, v21. Zacharias exceeded the unusual time of his service in the holy place. We evidently have only a portion of the conversation held, for the interview was lengthy, as the people "marveled that he tarried so long in the Temple."

The result of his silence, v22, was immediately made manifest in his appearing before the people "speechless," in his utter inability to speak, and in the fact that "he beckoned unto them." From his appearance and actions, the people at once recognized the sudden change, and attributed it to something wonderful taking place while Zacharias officiated within the sanctuary.

Zacharias return home, v23. But he only left after his public duties were performed. Notwithstanding this enforced silence, he was capable of attending to the altar of incense, and he faithfully discharged his office. The thoughts and feelings of the Zacharias, when he departed for his own house, can only be imagined. Reverent and hopeful, serious and joyful, his mind and heart, realized a memorable experience.

The beginning of fulfillment, v24.

"And after those days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and hid herself five months, saying, Thus hath the Lord dealt with me, in the days wherein he looked on me, to take away my reproach among men."

No variations exist among the leading Greek MSS.

As to renderings, the only one calling for attention is found in v25. For "looked on me to take," read or substitute, "deigned to take."

The only perversion presented, is based on unbelief in the Supernatural, and alleges that Elizabeth attributed directly to God that which merely resulted from natural law. Of course, this unwarranted process eliminates the Supernatural from the entire

chapter, and begets nothing but untruthfulness and gross deception. On the other hand, the admittance of the Supernatural brings forth unity, Divine supremacy, faith and hope in Divine purpose, assurance of the Divine ability to fulfill promises given, etc. It is an essential element, having an abounding personal experience to substantiate it. The testimony of Elizabeth outweighs all the assumptions of unbelief.

The direct teaching.

“Elizabeth conceived”. Through the all-pervading power of the Holy Spirit, the promise of God, given through Gabriel, was verified.

Elizabeth “hid (or, concealed) herself 5 months”. That is, she did not appear in public, but concealed her condition from others. Evidently feeling herself to be brought into her condition by God’s special favor and intervention, she felt that her position required of her, not to affirm and spread this act of Divine mercy but, to patiently and retiringly wait God’s time and method to make her condition manifest as was soon done, v44. Instead of boasting of the favor shown, there is a pious humility expressed in her attitude of retired waiting, and committing herself to God’s guidance.

The thankfulness of Elizabeth. Undoubtedly by writing Zacharias communicated to her the message of the angel and the calls of his enforced silence. Besides this, she realized that change wrought in her, agreeing with gracious Divine promise. She, fully and without reservation, acknowledges the Lord as the source of her blessing. More than natural law led to her condition. The child, to sub serve God’s purpose, was a gift from him.

She expresses her humility, by acknowledging the condescension of God in thus favoring her. She declares her gratitude in that her reproach among men should be taken away. To be destitute of children was regarded by the Jews as a great misfortune and the cause of reproach.¹⁷ Having a child, removed the reproach.

But Elizabeth, fully acquainted with the Angel’s message, includes in this more than the reception of an ordinary child, her reproach is not

¹⁷ The narrative of 1Sam 1:1–18, illustrates this feeling.

only taken away, but she is honored, as multitudes would gladly acknowledge, in being the mother of an extraordinary child, destined to be the forerunner of the glorious Messiah himself.

Chapter 1:26-38

The Annunciation.

“And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God, unto a city of Galilee named Nazareth. To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin’s name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary; for thou hast found favor with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. 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: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. Then said Mary unto the angel, how shall this be, seeing I know not a man? 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. And, behold, thy cousin Elizabeth, she has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For with God nothing shall be impossible. And Mary said, behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.”

Variations.

Leading MSS and the Revision, omit, v28, “Blessed art thou among women;” so also omit, v29, “when she saw him.”

Renderings.

In v27, read “betrothed” for “espoused;” in v28 some read “Hail! Highly favored one!” Others, “Hail! Endued with grace,” or as others, “Hail! Graced one!” In v29 some substitute “greatly agitated” for “troubled,” and “pondered” for “cast in her mind.” In v32, some prefer

“a Son of the Most High.” In v33, read, as the Greek, “to (or, unto) the ages” in place of “forever.” In v35, some read, “the holy thing (or, being) which is being begotten shall be called;” others read, “that which is born, since it is holy, shall be called;” others, “that which is to be born, shall be called holy;” others, “that begotten, being holy, shall be called.” In v36 for “cousin” some read “kinswoman.” in v37, some read, as the Revision, “For no word from God shall be void of power;” others, “For with God no word shall be powerless;” others “For no declaration is impossible with God.” the Greek word for “handmaid” in v38, is “bondmaid.”

Perversions.

1. That this conception is so contrary to natural law, that it is simply impossible and therefore incredible.

Ans: A sufficient reply is given in v37. The God of the Bible, the mighty Creator, does not create fetters, wherewith to bind himself.

2. It is contended that this account shows, that Mary, in being thus honored, is worthy of worship. In virtue of this conception and the birth of the Messiah, she is exalted to the position of mediatrix, advocate, intercessor, and “Queen of Heaven,” whose prayers or intercession are most powerful and efficacious, and who thus becomes “a fountain of grace.”

Ans: We have only one Mediator,¹⁸ only one Advocate or Intercessor.¹⁹

Mary cannot be put in the place of the Christ.²⁰

We do not require Mary’s assistance and interest.²¹

We are saved solely through Christ.²²

¹⁸ 1Tim 2:5; Heb 8:6; 9:15; 12:24.

¹⁹ 1John 2:1; Rom 8:34; Heb 9:25.

²⁰ Acts 4:12; John 10:9; 1Thess 5:9.

²¹ Acts 2:21; 15:11; 16:31; Rom 10:9; 1Pet 3:18.

²² 2Tim 2:10; Titus 3:5; 1John 1:7; 2:2; Eph 2:13, etc.

The Testimony of Luke

The idea reflects upon the ability and willingness of the Christ to save.²³ We are called to worship only God. This is so plain that it requires no further comment.²⁴ When the worship of the Father and Son are predicated, Mary is not included as worthy of the honor.²⁵

Jesus (not Mary) is always represented as the medium of conferred blessings.²⁶ By a personal faith in Jesus, i.e. appropriating Him personally, we obtain forgiveness of sins or justification.²⁷

This perversion presents Jesus, as if he must be placated, conciliated or (His wrath) appeased, over against the Scriptural representations of His compassion and love.²⁸

Mary is substituted, in a large degree, for doing the work of the Spirit.²⁹ The entire account represents Mary as the one who is favored, and not as the dispenser of favors, or possessing the ability to bestow them. Mary is a pious, meek, gentle, imminently worthy and lovely woman, but she is not, as to human nature, raised exceptionally above all other women. An honor above all others is bestowed upon her, but not a change that transformed her into another and differing woman (compare next perversion).

Her natural descent, betrothal to Joseph, marriage, attendance to religious duties, maternal and household engagements, intercourse with others, family and social relationships, all indicate the correctness of our position.

It is a remarkable, and purposely intended feature, that so very little is recorded respecting the life or history of Mary, as if designed to meet and reprove Mariolatry. Mary acted, and was regarded as one

²³ Heb 7:25; 1Cor 15:57; 1Tim 1:15; Rev 3:20; Col 2:10, etc.

²⁴ Exod 34:14; 20:4,5; Deu 6:13, 14; Isa 45:20.

²⁵ John 5:23; Phil 2:10; Rev 5:13; 7:9; 5:11,12; 15:6, etc.

²⁶ Col 1:19, 21; Phil 4:7; Eph 1:3; 5:2, 25; Rom 3:25.

²⁷ Rom 5:1, 9; 1Cor 6:11; Acts 10:43; 13:38; Eph 1:7; 4:32.

²⁸ Rom 5:6–11; John 15:9–11; Eph 5:2; Gal 2:20; Rev 1:5,6.

²⁹ Rom 8:26; 15:13; 1Cor 6:11; 12:13; Gal 5:5; Eph 1:16,17; 2:18–22; Phil 1:19, etc.

of the disciples.³⁰ Not a passage of Scripture can be produced, that makes her a source of grace. Jesus is the bestower of grace.³¹

Hence in this very Scripture, v28, Mary is represented as “endued with grace,” i.e. grace (or, favor) is bestowed upon her, and not as the Romish versions render it, in the interest of her worship, “full of grace.” This is corroborated by the force of the word in Eph1:6, which literally is, “has graced or, favored us.”

Not one passage of Scripture can be presented that makes prayer through Mary prevailing. It is prayer in and through Jesus alone that prevails.³²

This worship and prayer to Mary, virtually invests her with Divine attributes, e.g. omniscience and omnipresence, having the capability of knowing and hearing the prayers tendered to her in ten thousand different localities at the same time. Mary in this Scripture plainly acknowledges herself to be “handmaid” or “bondmaid” of the Lord, and yields herself submissively to the one great service required of her. No claim of special power, divinity, comes from her.

In support of Mariolatry, Scripture is rendered contradictory to fact, as e.g. that of Genesis 3:15. For, in the expression, “It shall bruise thy head,” there is substituted “she” for “it,” when the antecedent, to which the “it” refers, is “seed,” i.e. the woman’s seed.

Other reasons will be found under the reply to the following perversion.

3. Connected with the preceding, it is affirmed, that the fact of this conception shows that Mary herself, in order to be qualified for it, was immaculately conceived, i.e. she herself was sinless like Jesus.

Ans: This is based on mere inference. No Scripture can be found to sustain it. It is inferred in support of the sinlessness of Jesus. But His sinlessness does not require such an inference to sustain it. For it is

³⁰ Acts 1:14.

³¹ John 1:16,17; Acts 15:11; Rom 5:15; Eph 4:7, etc.

³² John 14:13,14; 16:23,24; Col 3:17; Eph 3:12, etc.

The Testimony of Luke

not derived from the fact, that Jesus was born of a virgin, but from the special power of the Holy Spirit, causing the conception to take place and protecting its purity and sinlessness by a Supernatural act and ordering.

More than this, the inference is made in order to aid in exalting Mary and in justifying her worship. Mary being sinless, is, therefore, not redeemed. This theory takes her out of the ranks of the redeemed, those washed in the blood of the lamb, for she has no sins to be cleansed in the atoning blood.

The Bible only exempts one person from the sinful results following the transgression of Adam and Eve, and that one person is Jesus, Divinely conceived by the Spirit, so as to be qualified to meet and remove the effects of the Fall of man.

That Mary needed redemption is apparent from her own language in v47 “my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.” She herself felt the necessity of having a “Savior” to save her from sin and its consequences. Mary attended to the sacrificial ordinances demanded by the Law for the remission of sins because she needed to. She believed, self-consciousness attesting, that she needed God’s provision made for sin, and correspondingly acted.

It is singular that if she was thus sinless and destined, as these advocates affirm, to occupy the position of intercessor, queen, that she did not accompany Jesus in His final ascension, but was left in charge of John.

Paul finds no special sinless elevation of Mary above other women or transcending David’s ordinary line.³³ The same is true of Peter’s declaration.³⁴

Instead of sinlessness, many of the Church fathers and interpreters believe that Jesus gave Mary a decided rebuke at Cana (Jo 2:1–12) in the words; “Woman, what have I to do with thee?” This is felt by the advocates of Mariolatry, and hence they render the phrase “Woman, what is it to thee and to me?” But they are inconsistent

³³ Gal 4:4, Rom 1:3.

³⁴ Acts 2: 30.

because the identical Greek words are used in Mark 5:7, and they rendered them there correctly, "What have I to do with thee?"

In Matthew 12:45–50, Mark 3:31–35, Luke 8:19–23, Jesus does not distinguish his mother from the brethren, but includes her, showing who, by obedience, are united to him. The account of Luke 2:48–51, also indicate that no superiority, arising from an Immaculate Conception and life, can be attributed to Mary.

All the intimations that we have of her life, during the childhood and the ministry of Jesus, at the cross and afterward, place her in the attitude of a believer, and one who was numbered among his disciples.

4. Associated with the preceding, is the declaration that Mary is "the Mother of God."

Ans: In a certain limited sense, this might be affirmed, viz: that, in view of the vital and inseparable union of the two natures, the Divine and the Human, constituting one personality, she was the mother of the Son of God, i.e. she gave birth to Him, the one person who was God–man. But the expression "Mother of God" is unlimited, misleading, and unscriptural, asserting entirely too much respecting Mary's agency.

Mary in no sense was the mother of the Divinity; for she did not conceive it, or nourish it, or develop it, or give birth to it. What she in her own nature, by Divine help, conceived, nurse, developed, and gave birth to, was David's seed according to the flesh, with which humanity God himself united Divinity. God only is the source, maintainer, and perpetuator of this Divine characteristic. Mary in no way contributed to the existence of this Divine feature, excepting only her agency in forming and cherishing the humanity with which God allied it.

Hence two distinct features of Scriptural representations are given. To Mary is directly ascribed the relationship to David and humanity; but to God is directly ascribed the Divinity, the Logos, that became identified with the humanity, constituting the one personality. It follows, therefore, that God and Mary were co-operative, the former

in bestowing what pertained to the Divine and the latter in nursing to completion the humanity that God's power caused her to conceive.

The pre-existence of the Divine, the Logos, and the Divine character attributed to it, forbid the use of such phraseology and hence the Scriptures do not employ it. So far as the conception, the union of the two natures, the production of this Divine–Human personality is concerned, the Supernatural is the great and sole cause, Mary occupying an important, but very subordinate part.

The Scriptures nowhere speak in such laudatory terms. Indeed as if foreseeing and meeting just such extravagant declarations, leading to and enforcing her worship, we have the remarkable statement of Luke 11:27,28 as a warning not to exalt her beyond her purely human relationship.

5. Intimately connected with the preceding, is the assumption of the perpetual virginity of Mary.

Ans: The Scriptures only ascribe virginity to her during the specially conferred honor and agency. It is an unproven inference, which seeks to magnify, and enforce the worship, of Mary. It is advocated to favor certain views respecting the excellences and merit of virginity. It makes marriage by contrast dishonorable, over against direct Scriptural teaching. It necessarily reflects unfavorably upon Mary's marriage with Joseph.

It matters little whether the brethren of Jesus (Luke 8:20) were real brothers of Jesus born afterward, or stepbrothers born to Joseph by a previous marriage, or cousins, or relatives of some kind, the fact that Mary was the acknowledged wife of Joseph and lived with him as such, publicly recognized as such, indicates that this view has no appropriate scriptural foundation to sustain it.

6. The revolting assumptions and deductions of gross unbelief, that this story was concocted to hide Mary's seductions that this child was Joseph's, etc.

Ans: Such statements are simply infamous, and can only originate in an evil heart. The mind that advocates them is influenced by hatred

to the Christ and an impure imagination. God will not hold such guiltless.

Without the slightest proof, to destroy the innocence, purity, and chastity of Mary, and to invalidate the Divine origin of Jesus, can only be attributed to malignancy. Due respect for the feelings of others, who so greatly prized and cherish this account, should prompt mind and heart, actuated by decency, courtesy and honor, never to harbor such serious and defamatory charges.

All this is due to the desire to eliminate the Supernatural element. Accept the God of the Bible, and such a miraculous work can be readily and heartily accepted. This unbelief purposely overlooks the fundamental relationship, the necessary connection that such a conception sustains to the Messiahship and to Redemption. Reject it and we have no Christ, no Savior, and no well-grounded hope. Such a Supernatural beginning is eminently fitting to precede the life that follows, for it qualifies to perform the wonderful works attributed to Jesus.

The perversions respecting David's throne, v32, and the perpetuity of the kingdom, v33, will, to avoid repetition, be noticed under versus 69-75.

The perversion, that Mary dreamed this, is such a gross violation of the account, that it requires no comment.

The direct teaching

The time, v26, is stated by the angel as the six-month after Elizabeth had conceived. The angel Gabriel sent from God was specially commissioned to perform this duty. He had the highest authority to reveal himself and deliver his message.

Sent to Nazareth, v26. Gabriel was not sent to Jerusalem are some prominent town, but to a small and despised place, the place itself being part of the humiliation. He was sent "to a virgin", v27. It was imminently fitting to select a virgin to be the medium of this wonderful conception; for it strikingly indicates both the chastity and the immediate exercise of omnipotent power.

The Testimony of Luke

The virgin was “espoused,” v27, i.e. betrothed. She was selected, not merely because of her piety and character, but also because she was thus betrothed to a pious man, who likewise would yield a reverent submission to the Divine Will. For this very betrothal served as a shield to this virgin, protecting her against false accusation, slander, and death.

She was betrothed to Joseph, v27. This is the more noticeable, as he also was “of the house of David,” i.e. a descendent of David’s. Hence both are of the same line, and in Mary as His mother, and in Joseph as his legal father, the claim of Royal descent is fully met.

Her name “was Mary”, v 27. This is the Greek word for “Miriam,” a name borne by the sister of Moses.³⁵ Some give to it the meaning of “exalted.” The very name is a reminder of what God says respecting Miriam (Micah 6:4), viz: that she was specially selected in order that God’s purposes could be carried out.

The angel came to Mary, v28. Not a vision or dream, but a distinct open personal visitation in the light of day. That was intentionally, owing to the communication made, a strictly private interview, appearing only to Mary.

The address of the Angel, v28.

“**Hail.**” This manner of salutation coming from an angel, means much. It is not merely a conventional mark of respect and honor, but embraces the idea of bestowed Divine favor, peace, joy, and blessing.

“**Highly favored**”, or rather “endued with grace,”³⁶ i.e. being the chosen and honored one, who should become the mother of the covenanted, predicted, and long-expected Messiah. The angel does not refer to an antecedent favor bestowed (as e.g. an immaculate conception), but of a present grace of which he was the bearer and she the recipient.

³⁵ Exod 15:20; Num 12:1; Mic 6:4)

³⁶ Compare Eph 1:6.

“The Lord is (or, be) with thee” -a most gracious assurance of special nearness and Divine mercy.

“Blessed art thou among women.” While authoritative MSS and the Revision omit this, many ancient manuscripts and versions retain it. We find all authorities retain it as given in v42, and hence the sentiment expressed is to be received as true. She was made happy and illustrious, in having the sole honor of being the mother of the exalted Messiah.

The effect this appearance and salutation had upon Mary, v29.

“She saw him,” i.e. -a distinct manifestation. She heard his address to her. The very appearance of the Angel and his manner of speaking deeply impressed her. For, “she was troubled,” i.e. -agitated, fearful, anxious and perplexed. The honor of such a visit, its suddenness, it’s being unexpected, and extraordinary nature of the salutation, caused her to be greatly moved.

Not knowing what it meant, she resolved the matter in her mind, thus showing that amidst her agitation and fear she kept her presence of mind.

The announcement of the Angel, vs 30–33.

“Fear not”, i.e. dismiss all your anxiety and fear, for this coming to you is for blessing.

“Fear not , Mary.” the Angel knew her name and pronounced it; a fact which evidences angelic knowledge, and which must have encouraged Mary.

“Thou hast found favor with God.” Mary’s personal characteristics, her piety, her descent from David, her betrothal to Joseph also a descendent of David’s, fitted her for the honor that God intended to bestow upon her.

“Thou shalt conceive in thy womb.” Being a virgin, and by nature under the control of natural law regulating conception, this can only be produced in two ways; in the ordinary way allotted to humanity, or by direct exertion of Divine creative power. The first, for substantial

reasons (given under v35), could not possibly be allowed, and hence, the Second, a miraculous conception, falls as essential.³⁷

“Bring forth a son.” Thus fulfilling the covenant promises made to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David and thus realizing specific prophecies.³⁸ It is a complete realization of the sign or pledge that “a virgin shall conceive and bear a son.”³⁹

“Shalt call his name Jesus.” “Jesus” is the same name found in the Old Testament and rendered “Joshua.” It’s meaning is, “he who shall save” or “a Savior.” This is his personal name, and is to be distinguished from his title, or titular name “the Messiah” (or, “the Christ).”

“He shall be great.” There is an undoubted reference here to the predictions of greatness, to be realized in Him⁴⁰.

He shall be great in person.⁴¹

He shall be great in wisdom, knowledge, power.⁴²

He shall be great in providing Redemption.⁴³

He shall be great in view of his exaltation to heaven.⁴⁴

He shall be great because of his ultimate world dominion.⁴⁵

The highest honor and worship or ascribed to him.⁴⁶

³⁷ Compare v35.

³⁸ Isa 9:6; 11:1; Psalms 89:34–37; Jer 23:5; 33:15, etc.

³⁹ Isa 7:14; also compare Isa 9:1–7; with Matt 1:22, 23.

⁴⁰ Psa 89:24–37; 2:7–12; Zeph 3:14–20; Zech 2:10–13; Mic 4:1–7; Isa 32:1; Hos 3:5.

⁴¹ Isa 9:6; Psa 89:27; 118:22,23; Mic 5:2; Jer 23:6; 2Cor 4:4; Col 1:15.

⁴² Isa 11:2; 52:13; Matt 28:18; 1Cor 1:24; Col 2:10.

⁴³ Acts 2:36; 5:30,31; Eph 1:20–23; Heb 1:3; 8:3; 10:12; 12:2.

⁴⁴ Psa 110:1; Acts 2:34,35; Col 3:1; Acts 8:55; 1Pet 3:22; Phil 2:9.

⁴⁵ Dan 7:13,14; Psa 2:6,7,8; 110:1-6; Rev 11:15; Psalms 72:8; Zech 9:10; 14:9.

⁴⁶ Heb 1:6; Rev 5:11–13; 7:9; 15:6; Isa 25:9; Phil 2:9,10; Zech 14:16.

“Shall be called the Son of the Highest,” (or, “the Most High”).

He is to be “the Son of God.”⁴⁷

He is such in his humanity, for the virgin could not have conceived without God’s direct creative power exerted. It is a miraculous, Supernatural conception, and Paul combines the Divine and women’s passivity in the expression “God sent forth His Son, made of a woman.”⁴⁸

Hence Jesus is both “the Son of God” and the son of Mary, but the angel, to encourage Mary, lays stress on God’s agency. As the direct Divine agency is again manifested in the power of the resurrection from the dead, He is declared to be “the Son of God” in virtue of the creative agency exercised.⁴⁹

Therefore, in view of this Sonship, Jesus claims God as His Father.⁵⁰ It designates the Messiahship of Jesus; for it indicates that He shall not only be David’s Son but also David’s Lord.⁵¹

“And the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of his father David.” “The Lord God shall give”, i.e. the Father, the Most High.⁵² The angel’s statement declares the certainty of ultimate realization.⁵³

The time of this giving, as presented by Daniel 7, is after the Roman empire is divided, after the ten kingdoms appear, after the rise and progress of “the little horn” of power, after three kingdoms are rooted out, and hence cannot chronologically and historically be applied to the giving or the founding of the Christian church, which was established before these events when the Roman Empire was in its highest undivided power and strength.

⁴⁷ Psalms 2:7; 89:27; Matt 3:17; John 1:34,49; 9:35,37; 10:36; 19:7; 20:17; Acts 3:13.

⁴⁸ Gal 4:4.

⁴⁹ See Rom 1:4; Acts 13:33 compared with Psalms 2:7.

⁵⁰ As e.g. John 3:35; 5:23; Matt 11:25,27; Luke 10:22.

⁵¹ Compare Matthew 22:41–46 and Mark 12:35–37.

⁵² Luke 22:29,30.

⁵³ This is delineated in Dan 7:14, with which compare Isa 49, Luke 22:29; Psa 2:8,9.

This giving is the result of a set Divine Purpose, covenanted and predicted, and for the realization of which the Son of God and Son of Mary is now to be conceived and born.

“The throne of his father David.”

The angel does not deal in types or allegorical language, but portrays realities in precise language, easily understood. We dare not allow any spiritualizing which transforms this “throne of David” into something else, such as God’s throne in heaven, or headship over the Church, or a Spiritual reign, or Divine sovereignty, etc. The plain normal sense must be retained.

The Davidic throne and kingdom incorporated into and identified with the Theocratic government, although downfallen is to be restored. The angel, by this language, predicts and proclaims its restoration by this Jesus. In this, he only repeats what the prophets had long before plainly and emphatically predicted.⁵⁴

When Jesus came he found this Davidic house in a desolate, overthrown condition, and owing to the sinfulness of the nation, He left it in that condition until His Second Advent.⁵⁵ Instead of restoration, the Temple was to be destroyed, the city (Jerusalem) to be down trodden and the nation to be scattered during a period called “the times of the Gentiles.”⁵⁶

But at the Second Advent, this long downfallen house, throne and kingdom, shall again be restored. The explicit and unmistakable testimony of the apostles, uniting in a deliberate utterance upon the subject, is all that we require in support of our position, as recorded in Acts 15:16. The declaration of the Angel, the promise of Isa 9:7, will yet be amply fulfilled at the designated time.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Amos 9:11–15; Hos 3:4; Eze 21:25–27; 34:22–31; 37:18–28; Jer 30:4–24.

⁵⁵ Matthew 23:37–39; Luke 13:34,35.

⁵⁶ Luke 21.

⁵⁷ Matt 19:28; 25:31; Zech 14:5, 9; Rev 11:15; 19:11–16.

Such a restoration, for wise reasons long–delayed, cannot possibly fail, because this Theocratic Davidic throne and kingdom form the inheritance of this Messiah.⁵⁸

This throne and kingdom is directly covenanted and confirmed by oath, hence its reality and not typical nature.⁵⁹ It is confirmed by this real covenanted relationship being “everlasting,” or a perpetual arrangement, enduring for the ages, and will, therefore, be most fully realized.⁶⁰

The strongest assurances that language can possibly express are given to inspire faith in a real restoration of the covenanted Theocratic Davidic throne and kingdom.⁶¹

The angel employed language that Mary, knowing well the Jewish faith and hope, could readily comprehend. There was no deception, no accommodation to prejudice, no veiling of the truth, but the truth itself was conveyed in the plain grammatical sense.

The present non-realization of a restoration, gives only strong confirmatory evidence in favor of an ample ultimate fulfillment of covenant and prediction concerning this throne and kingdom. The reasons for this long delay are fully presented, the chief that are assigned being the sinfulness and punishment of the nation, the preparatory measure of taking out of the nations a people, which are to be incorporated with the restored kingdom.

“And He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever” or literally, as the Greek, “to the ages.”

“The house of Jacob”, i.e. the family or descendants of Jacob, or the children of Israel. For to them pertain the covenants and

⁵⁸ Compare Psalms 94:14; Zech 2:12; 1Sam 10:11; 26:19; Psalms 28:9; 2Sam 21:3; 2Kings 21:14; Isa 65:9.

⁵⁹ 2Sam 7:10–16; 23:1–5; 1Chron 17:11–14; Psalms 89:3,4,33; 132:11; Acts 2:30.

⁶⁰ Psalms 89:34; Isa 55:3; 2Sam 23:5.

⁶¹ Jer 33:17–26; 31:35–37; Isa 54:9,10; Psa 89:36,37; 133:13–18.

promises. Gentiles to inherit and enjoy with them these blessings, must be engrafted or incorporated by the principle of faith.⁶²

This expression includes all the tribes, and not merely the ten tribes; for the twelve tribes are all descendants of Jacob.⁶³ To perform this promise, a restoration is, of course, necessary. This arises from the covenanted relationship of the nation. To it specifically was the Theocratic Davidic kingdom confirmed by covenant. Its realization may be delayed owing to the unworthiness of the nation, but the covenant remains sure, to be amply verified when the set time, purposed by God, arrives. This cannot be abrogated or altered.

Three points bear repeating;

1. The Davidic throne and kingdom are inseparable, and hence if the former is restored, the latter must participate in the restoration.
2. Uniformly and continuously prediction links the restoration of the kingdom and of the nation together, they mutually support each other.
3. This necessity springs from God's own honor, faithfulness and the Divine Purpose intended.⁶⁴

This restoration, implied by the angel, is abundantly predicted.⁶⁵ This restoration and reign are associated with a predicted repentance and conversion of the Jewish nation. This is an essential pre-requisite as the restored kingdom under the Messiah is to be a holy kingdom.⁶⁶ In virtue of this restoration and reign, "the house of

⁶² Galatians chapter 3 and Ephesians chapters 2 and 3.

⁶³ Compare the comments under v16.

⁶⁴ Compare Eze 36:22, 32; Rom 11:8; Lev 26:42–45.

⁶⁵ Isa 11:10–16; Eze 36:8–38; Ch 37; Eze 11:16–20; Jer 32:37–44; Jer 3:14–18; Zeph 3:8–20; Zech Ch 8; Jer Ch 31; Mic Chapters 4 & 5; Isa Chapters 43 & 52 are but a small portion of the many prophecies relating to the subject.

⁶⁶ Romans 11; Matt 23:37; Luke 13:35; Isa 44:22,23; 59:19–21; Jer 31:2,3; Zeph 3:8,9; Zech 12:10; Eze 20:33–44; Mic 7:15–20.

Jacob”, it is predicted, shall have an assured exaltation and supremacy over the nations of the earth.⁶⁷

Such a restoration cannot be spiritualized or allegorized, and applied to the Christian Church, without doing gross violence to predictive language and perverting the prophecies. The identical nation, city, and land suffering God’s wrath, are to be restored. “The outcasts of Israel” are to be delivered. The threatening’s of evil came literally, the blessings promised to same people will come in like manner.⁶⁸ It is utterly impossible for dispersion and restoration, tribulation and blessings, as predicted, to be contemporaneous. The specific mention of the desolate land, down-trodden city, scattered nation, waste places, ruined cities, old estates, forbid any other interpretation, to be just to the Word, than the one here advocated.⁶⁹

“And of his kingdom there shall be no end.” The perpetuity of the kingdom, when restored, is most clearly and emphatically taught.⁷⁰ The angel is merely repeating what Daniel had so plainly predicted.⁷¹ Jesus is King not merely for an age, but as in the Greek, of “the ages,” and, therefore, this perpetuity is distinctly affirmed.⁷²

The innocent, natural query of Mary v34. Conscious of her chastity, and influenced by the uniform working of natural law, she asks, “How shall this be?”

The response of the Angel, vs 35–37.

The supernatural, miraculous conception, v35, was the work of the Holy Spirit. It is a special direct creative act. Natural law could not have produced it, and hence God, by Divine agency, brings forth this

⁶⁷ Mic 4:8; Zech Ch 14; Isa Chs 54, 60, 61; Zech 8:22; Isa 49:22, 23; Zeph 3:19, 20.

⁶⁸ Jer 32:40,44; 31:27,28.

⁶⁹ The author’s large work “The Theocratic kingdom”, the subject is presented in detail in Vol 2 under propositions 111–114.

⁷⁰ Compare Prop 159, Vol 2, in “the Theocratic Kingdom” for a discussion in detail.

⁷¹ Daniel 2:44; 7:14.

⁷² 1Tim 1:17; 2Sam 7:16; Heb 1:8; Rev 11:15; Isa 9:7; 2Pet 1:11; Psa 89:4,29, 36,37.

The Testimony of Luke

result. It is the same Divine Spirit that has been active in creation, and in carrying out the Will and Purpose of God.⁷³

Because of this direct, immediate agency of God, he is designated “Holy” and “the Son of God.”

It is a great mystery, as all creative acts are, and is simply presented as a great and essential fact, without the least explanation. It pertains to the Supernatural, which lies beyond our present understanding.

In this conception takes place the union of the two natures, the Divine and the human, in one personality.⁷⁴ Such a conception, astounding as it is, commends itself to our acceptance, being both necessary and reasonable. It provides a superhuman Savior, having the power to save. It brings humanity into a most intimate and enduring relationship with the Divine.

It preserves the sinlessness of Jesus, and eminently fits him to make the atoning sacrifice. It exalts His humanity. For while the Son of Man; made “like unto his brethren,” “in the likeness of men,” “was found in fashion as a man,” etc., He is exalted above his brethren in virtue of the qualifications resulting directly from such a conception.

It gives completeness and a consistency to the Divine Purpose of Redemption, seeing that God’s love, mercy, and power thus furnish the Person through whom the covenants and predictions can be fully realized.

It provides a perfect Theocratic–Davidic King, in whom the two natures, Divine and Human, once separated, are permanently united. While bestowing the perfection of humanity (without sin, but for sin), it adds to it a superhuman dignity in the bestowal of the pre-imminent “fullness of the Godhead bodily.”⁷⁵

⁷³ Gen 1:2; Job 26:13; Psa 104:30; Rom 15:18,19; 1Cor 12:4,7–11.

⁷⁴ As expressed in John 1:14; 1Tim 3:16; 1John 1:1, 2; Mic 5:2; Phil 2:6–8; Isa 9:6; Heb 1:2–13; Col 1:15–18.

⁷⁵ Colossians 2:9.

The union of the Divine and Human in one personality could not possibly take place under natural law, and hence, such a union being part of the Divine Plan purposed, we are prepared for this wonderful and Supernatural agency exerted.

It forms the highest and most glorious exhibition of God's creative love and his deep interest in his own creation. It enforces that creation is derived from God, and finds its unity in Him. It is a grand preparative for atonement; a solid basis for redemptive work; an explanation of His wonderful wisdom, knowledge, and power; a qualification for present exaltation and future glory. Finally, it invites faith, inspires hope, imparts comfort, bestows strength, and gives peace to the believer.

To encourage Mary, the Angel refers, v36, to her cousin, or kinswoman, Elizabeth who also by Divine aid conceived in her old age. The mention of her being advanced to the sixth month indicates the intimate knowledge possessed by the Angel.

The reason assigned for belief, v37.

When God once declares, as in this instance, that a thing shall come to pass, he also has the power to bring forth the accomplishment. God's might and power are unlimited.⁷⁶

The immediate and unqualified submissiveness of Mary, v38.

Mary must have been deeply impressed by the appearance, language and the assurances of the Angel. Her reply and acceptance, exhibit a humble, pious, and devoted spirit.

⁷⁶ Luke 18:27; Matt 19:26; Rom 4:27; Gen 18:14; Phil 3:21; Dan 4:3,35.

Chapter 1:39–56

The visit of Mary to Elizabeth.

“And Mary arose in those days, and went into a Hill country with haste, into a city of Judaea; and entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elizabeth. And it came to pass, that, when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost (Spirit): And she spake out with a loud voice; and said, Blessed art thou among women; and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. And blessed is she that believed; for there shall be a performance of those things, which were told her from the Lord. And Mary said, my soul does magnify the Lord. And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. For He has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden; for behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty has done to me great things; and holy is his name. And his mercy is on them that fear him, from generation to generation. He has showed strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He has put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them, of low degree. He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he had sent empty away. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy; as the state to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever. And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned to her own house.”

Variations

In v50, for “from generation to generation,” read “unto generations of generations,” or, “unto generations and generations.”

Renderings

In v45, many read, “Blessed is she which believed that there shall be;” in v51 some read “scattered those proud in the thought of their hearts;” in v52, for “the mighty from their seats,” read “rulers (or,

potentates) from their thrones;" in v54, some read, "He supports Israel, his own child, to remember mercy (as He spoke to our fathers) to Abraham and to his seed even to the age."

Perversions

1. That it was simply impossible for an unborn babe to respond in the manner indicated, vs 41-44.

Ans: Receiving, as we do, the Supernatural agency exerted in behalf of Elizabeth and upon Mary, it is in perfect accord to accept of this extraordinary occurrence under, as stated, direct Supernatural guidance and influence.

It was Divinely wrought, in order to encourage and strengthen these two women, whom God had selected to supply a most pressing need, and to introduce two essential factors of the Divine purpose,- the Forerunner and the Messiah.

2. That this action of the baby indicates a capability of infants exercising faith.

Ans: It does nothing of the kind. It is purely and solely a miraculous transaction. An exertion of Supernatural power influenced the babe to act as it did at the time of the salutation. The proof is found in the fact that Elizabeth herself, v41, "was filled with the Holy Spirit."

It is taking an exceptional case, specially wrought to meet a contingency, and bolster up with it and indefensible theological dogma.

3. That this scripture reinforces the worship of Mary, v 42, 48.

Ans: See the perversions under the preceding section.

4. Limiting Mary's language to the present.

Ans: It is largely prophetic. See under 'direct teaching.'

5. That Mary's laudation of Salvation, finds its exact equivalent in present experience and phraseology.

Ans: It is language largely based on covenant and prophecy, and must be correspondingly understood and applied. See 'direct teaching,' part 4.

6. That the promises made to Abraham are fully realized in the present.

Ans: There is only a partial fulfillment. A sufficiency is given in the Advent of the Seed, to encourage faith and hope in an ample fulfillment of the remainder in God's own time. Compare the direct teaching on Mary and Zacharias's language.

The direct teaching

The visit, vs 39-40.

"**With haste,**" for she was Divinely impressed to go just at this period.

"**A city in Judea.**" What city or place this was is not known. Some favor the reading, "a city, Juttah." Mary enters the house of Zacharias and salutes Elizabeth, manifesting her gratification and joy at meeting with her.

The results following the salutation, vs 41-44.

The babe, unborn, leapt as an expression of recognition and joy. It was a supernatural occurrence, fitting; to show the relationship that the Forerunner sustained to the Messiah, and to confirm the faith and trust of Elizabeth and Mary.

This is clearly shown by the additional statement, that "Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit," i.e. she was directly influenced and inspired by the Spirit.

What Elizabeth, thus directed, said, vs 42–45.

“Blessed art thou among women,” i.e. Mary would ever be regarded as having a distinguished honor in being the mother of the Messiah.

“Blessed is the fruit of thy womb.” The life, works, redemptive position, exaltation, of Jesus verifies this blessedness.

The humility expressed in v43. Elizabeth through the Spirit, and the sign given by the moving of the babe, recognized Mary as **“the mother of my Lord.”** Impressed that Mary’s son would be the long promised Messiah, she at once predicted and acknowledged His great dignity and distinguished honor. He was to be the mighty King, obtaining world–wide dominion, and this Messianic expectation and glory, is concisely conveyed in the words **“My Lord.”**

Having such a view of the Messiah, and his predicted Majesty and rule, she declares, that Mary’s coming to her, bearing this expected Lord, is conferring a great honor. She reverences the babe.

The remarkable sign, stated in v44, fully convinced Elizabeth, both that her own babe was related as a forerunner, and that Mary was to be the mother of the Messiah. It was a sign produced by the direct and immediate agency of the Spirit, and timed, to make it the more striking, with the salutation.

In v45, the rendering is preferred which makes Mary “blessed in that she believed that there shall be, etc.” Taking this rendering, the faith that Mary exercised in the announcement of the Angel, caused the Divine blessing to rest upon her.

Taking the rendering of our version, Mary believing shall be blessed, because all that the Angel announced shall be fully realized. In either case, this reference to believing brings out in contrast the condition of Zacharias, who even then was suffering the penalty of silence, owing to his unbelief.

What Mary responded, vs 46–55.

She, v46, is urged to praise or extol the Lord. He is recognized and acknowledged as the source of all blessing

Mary rejoices, v47, **“in God my Savior.”** She thus confesses that she needs a Savior, which disposes of the Romish view of Mary’s sinlessness and exaltation. Mary expresses her faith, hope, and joy in the promises of the Old Testament Scriptures to be realized.⁷⁷ It will not answer to explain Mary’s language to mean, according to modern notions that God merely saves from sin and death, bestowing eternal life. It denotes much more, viz: the deliverance of the Jewish nation from its enemies; the restoration of the Theocratic–Davidic kingdom; the world–dominion of the Messiah; the enjoyment of distinguished civil and political blessings.

Was she wrong in entertaining such a faith and hope? Let her Inspiration, the covenant, prediction, etc. answer. Let the teaching of Jesus and the faith of the apostles give the requisite response.

“He has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden.” i.e. the humble or low condition. For although she was poor and in a lowly rank, yet God, to impress the Divine humiliation, showed special favor to her.

“From henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.” She shall be distinguished, and all believers will pronounce her name and praise. She is not to be worshiped, or elevated to a place of mediation and intercession, but is to be held in high esteem and honor, because of her motherly relationship to Jesus.

“For he that is mighty has done to me great things.” We are not to limit this inspired language to what Mary had experienced, in the visit of the Angel, her conception, or her motherhood of the Messiah, for; she embraced in it the predictions relating to the glorious future of the Messiah and she included in it herself personally experiencing deliverance and blessedness under the reign of this Son.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Isa 25:9; 35:4; 49:25, 26; 62:1,11; Jer 3:23.

⁷⁸ Her faith and hope accord with Psa 71:19–24; Jer 32:17–19.

To see the agreement with the predictions, let the reader notice the description of the Messianic reign and then compare the concluding words of Psalms 72:18,19 with Mary's language.⁷⁹

“And Holy is His name.” Compare the concluding words of Psalm 72 already referred to, and such passages as Psalms 111:9; 89:18.

“And His mercy is to them that fear (i.e. reverence) Him unto generations and generations.” While true of the past, the reference is more particularly to the future. This is clearly seen in the predictions relating to the future, and in the fact, that God's mercy in forgiveness, blessing, and in glorious restitution, is not withdrawn.⁸⁰
81

The expression “to generations and generations,” deserves notice. It is indefinite, and indicative of perpetuity. The phrase directs attention to the still future wonderful increase of the Jewish nation as predicted.⁸² It is language in perfect accord with that of the Abrahamic covenant.⁸³

It is used as the equivalent for “the ages of ages,” expressive of perpetuity and to make this more emphatic, the generations and ages are united in Eph 3:21 (literally “unto all generations of the age of the ages”).⁸⁴ It implies God's faithfulness.⁸⁵

The phrase refers to the successive generations under the glorious reign of the Messiah.⁸⁶

“He has showed (or, shows) strength with his arm.”

⁷⁹ Also compare Jer 33:3–11; Isa 26:4.

⁸⁰ For predictions, see Micah 7:15–20; Psa 89:1–4, 14–18, 24; Isa 30:18; 55:3; Jer 31:31–40.

⁸¹ For mercy extended, not withstanding past sinfulness, see Rom chapter 11,

Isa chapters 54, 60; Psa 89:28, 29; 102:13; Jer 30:18; Zech 10:6.

⁸² Isa 61:4–11; 62:1–9; 44:3, 4; Zech 8:3, 6; Psa 102:28.

⁸³ Gen 13:16; 15:5; 22:17; 26:4; and such prophecies as Jer 33:22; Num 23:10.

⁸⁴ Compare Psa 72:5.

⁸⁵ Psa 33:11, 12; 61:6; 89:1; 100:5.

⁸⁶ Psalms 45:17 (observe the connection); 48:13; 89:4; Isa 60:15; Joel 3:20.

The “arm” is the symbol of strength or power. The “finger” of God, expresses power, the “hand” his great power, and the “arm” his omnipotent power. This has been true in the past dealings of God toward the nation and the world, especially manifested in the overthrow of enemies. But the main reference here is a predictive one relating to the future, and associated with the period of restitution.⁸⁷ The phrase is a virtual declaration of the future all-powerful rule of the Messiah.⁸⁸

“He hath scattered (or, disperses) the proud in the imagination (or, thought) of their hearts.” This has been notably true in the past, especially in the case of Pharaoh and great enemies of the Jewish nation. But this will be pre-eminently the case at the Second Advent, at the time of restoration.

Then “the proud,” i.e. those arrogant and overbearing by reason of great power, will be fearfully overthrown.⁸⁹

“In the thought of their hearts,” i.e. in the evil that they imagine and hope to accomplish. For, in their pride they think to crush all believers and resist the Christ himself.⁹⁰

“He hath put down (or, casts down) the mighty (or, rather, Princes or Potentates) from their seats (or rather, thrones).” This too has been verified in the past in Jewish history. And it will be realized on a grander scale at the Second Advent. The predictions are numerous, plain, and decisive.⁹¹

⁸⁷ This is clearly seen by comparing the following predictions and the connection in which they stand: Isaiah 51:9; 52:10; 59:16; 63:5; 62:8; Ezekiel 20:33, 34

⁸⁸ Compare Isa 40:10; 51:5; Psa 89:13,21; 98:1.

⁸⁹ Compare the predictions of Isa 2: 12; Mal 4:1; Psa 73:6–10 with vs19, 20; Isa 25:11.

⁹⁰ Compare Psalms 94:10; 64; 62:4; 83:2; Micah 4:11–13; Revelation 13:6–17.

⁹¹ Compare Rev 19:19–21; 17:12–14; 16:14; Psa 2;48:4; 72:4–11; 76:12; 102:15; 110:5; 149:8; Isa 24:21; 41:2.

“Exalted them of low degree.” This is fully verified in the future Kingship and priesthood of believers at the manifestation of the sons of God at the Second Advent.⁹²

“He hath filled (or, fills) the hungry with good things.” This reminds us of one of the Beatitudes, Matt 5:6 and its highest realization Psalms 17:15. How this will be abundantly verified under Messiah’s glorious reign, is clearly revealed in Scripture.⁹³

“And the rich he hath sent empty away.” This is realized fully in the overthrow of the mighty Confederation of the Kings, princes and powerful adherents at the Second Coming of the Messiah. Prediction lays stress upon the power, riches, exultant dominion, of the last great-culminated Antichristian host, and carefully informs us how this rich and gigantic power will be utterly crushed⁹⁴ by the coming of the Lord Jesus and his Saints.⁹⁵

“He hath holpen (helps, or, supports) his servant (or, child) Israel, in remembrance of his mercy; as He spake to our Fathers, to Abraham, and to his Seed forever (or, for an age).” These words are profoundly significant and in their conciseness contain the most important truths. Consider the following; “Israel,” i.e. the Jewish nation, the descendants of Jacob, called Israel, (direct reference to the still future glorious restoration to a position of honor, power, blessedness, and glory of the Jewish nation).⁹⁶

“His servant or child Israel.” Now when we refer to the prophecies, we find this precise language and express words of endearment employed, showing the near relationships sustained by Israel.⁹⁷

⁹² Then 1Sam 2:7,8 will be amply realized, when Psa 149 is fulfilled. Also compare Eze 21:26; Psa 113:7,8; 92:10.

⁹³ Isa 25:6–8; Rev 19:9; Isa 49:10; Rev 7:16,17; Isa 65:13.

⁹⁴ Rev chapter 19, Isaiah 63, Joel 3, Zephaniah 3,

⁹⁵ Compare Zech 14; 2Thess chapters 1&2; Rev 11:15–18; Rev 14:14–20; Matt 24:30,31; 25:31–46.

⁹⁶ Isa 11:10–16; Eze 36:8–38; chapters 11, 34, 37; Jer 31,32,33; Isaiah 43,52,54,60.

⁹⁷ Compare Hosea 11:1 with Hosea 13:13,14 and 14:4–9;

“In remembrance of his mercy,” or, “remembering mercy.” That is, verifying special promises made by God through his Divine compassion, pity, and love.⁹⁸ It indicates the faithfulness of God to his promises, founded as they are upon his mercy.⁹⁹

This attribute of mercy in relation to the future restoration and glory of the Jewish nation is frequently presented throughout Scripture.¹⁰⁰ It indicates the certainty of the Jewish restoration and blessedness because founded on the Divine attributes and assurances.¹⁰¹

“As he spake unto our Fathers,” i.e. the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob referring to the covenant made with them.¹⁰² This contains the exceeding great and precious promises relating to the Jewish nation and the Messianic hope. It is the foundation revelation of the divine will and purpose pertaining to the nation. The Jewish faith and hope received this covenant in its plain grammatical meaning.¹⁰³

“To (or, toward) Abraham,” i.e. the first one to whom the special personal and national promises were given.

“And to his Seed.” While this may include Abrahams posterity, yet as the covenant purposely employs the singular number, as if to discriminate one particular and illustrious individual or descendant, we must not overlook the fact, just as Paul reasons in Galatians

Jer 31:20–37; Eze 16, keeping in view the conclusion, vs 60–63; Isa 41:8–16.

⁹⁸ Compare Micah 7:19,20; Isa 55:3; 63:7–19; 44:1–8.

⁹⁹ Zeph 3:8–20; Zech 10:6–12; Psa 135; Hosea 2:19,20.

¹⁰⁰ Isa 54:7,8,10; 60:10; Eze 20:41–44; Isa 49:13–23; Psa 89:1, 2, 14, 24, 28, 33.

¹⁰¹ Micah 7:18–20; Isa 54:7–10; Eze 17:22–24; Isa 52:1–10; Zech 8:1–8; Psa 72, 132, 89.

¹⁰² Gen 12:1–3,7; 13:14–17; 15:4–21; 17:4–16; 22:15–18.

¹⁰³ For details see Props 46,47,48,49 in Vol 1, of “The Theocratic Kingdom”).

3:16, that references made to the Messiah, the pre-imminent Seed of whom it is predicted.¹⁰⁴

“Forever,” or , literally, “unto an age.” This expresses the Jewish faith and hope in the future “times of the Messiah,” “days of the Messiah,” “age of the Messiah,” “the coming age,” “the age to come.” For impressed by the covenants and prophecies, pious Jews believed that under the glorious reign and dominion of the Messiah, a new ordering, or dispensation, or age would be introduced, which they designated, “the world (or age) to come.”

The length of Mary’s visit and her return home.

Mary remained with Elizabeth, for their mutual encouragement and confirmation of faith. She remained, until fully assured that the time had come, when the Lord, who had favored her, would make her innocence and purity appear to Joseph, her betrothed, in such a direct manner that he would be satisfied. It was not her province to announce to Joseph her condition, she left such an announcement to God who placed her so honorably in it, and her faith was not disappointed.

What interesting communications must have passed, during these three months, between the two pious and Divinely favored women.

*Note. It is not said of Mary, as of Elizabeth and Zacharias that she was “filled with the Spirit.” The omission is intentional, because the power and the guidance of the Spirit remained with her during this entire period.

¹⁰⁴ Zech 2:12; Isa 65:9; 63:17; Psa 94:14; 132.

Chapter 1:57–66

The birth of John.

“Now Elizabeth’s full time came, that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son. And her neighbors and her cousins heard how the Lord had showed great mercy upon her; and they rejoiced with her. And it came to pass, that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; and they called him Zachariah, after the name of his father. And his mother answered and said, not so; but he shall be called John. And they said into her, there is none of thy kindred that is called by this name. And they made signs to his father, how he would have him called. And he asked for a writing table, and wrote, saying, his name is John. And they marveled all. And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue loosed, and he spake, and praised God. And fear came on all that dwelt round about them: and all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill country of Judea. And all they that heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, what manner of child shall this be? And the hand of the Lord was with him.”

Variations

In v66, leading MSS, read: “For indeed the hand of the Lord was with him.”

Renderings

In v58, for “cousins,” read “kinsfolk” or “kinswomans” in v59, for “called,” some read “would have called” or others, “were about to call;” for “table,” v63, read “tablet;” in v66, some read, “what then shall this child be?”

Perversions

None of importance; for it is only a determination to eliminate, without regard to statements and facts, the Supernatural, that influences men to make out the Zecharias’s recovery to be due to the strength of his emotions, a natural result of highly-wrought feelings (?) To make, on the other hand, his silence a voluntary act

and his speaking again voluntary, demands immensely more faith than simple faith in the Supernatural.

The direct teaching

The child, the Son of promise, is born, v57. The angel's announcement is verified.

The congratulations of Elizabeth's neighbors and relatives, v58, exhibiting a kind and loving interest in her welfare. These friends were pious; they acknowledged God's agency, having "heard how the Lord had showed great mercy upon her."

The child was circumcised on the eighth day, v59.

Circumcision was divinely appointed, Genesis 17:10–14. It was obligatory, and the external token of the covenant between God and his chosen ones through Abraham. It was admittance to a recognized covenant relationship. The day appointed was the eighth day, then, also, the name was given.¹⁰⁵

The friends and relatives wanted the child to be called Zacharias, v59, because the name of the father was commonly given to the eldest son. Elizabeth, however, refused to accept the suggested name, v60. She said, "he shall be called John." The name was expressive and appropriate, meaning, "the grace, gift, or mercy of the Lord," for he was the result of God's grace and special favor. The angel had particularly designated the name, John.

Zacharias must have communicated the name, proposed by the angel, in writing to Elizabeth, or the fact was divinely impressed. This was the more remarkable for the reason assigned in v61. It was customary thus to perpetuate the names of parents, thus showing them honor.

¹⁰⁵ Gen 21:4, Lev 12:3.

“They made signs to his father,” v62.

This implies that deafness was also included, for if Zacharias heard, signs would be unnecessary. They supposed that the father would adopt the name suggested by them.

Zacharias, v63, used a writing tablet, i.e. commonly a small board or leaden sheet covered with a thin layer of wax, upon which an impression was made by means of an iron or brass style. Upon the tablet of wax, the father designates that he shall be called John. This agreement with his wife’s choice causes them all to marvel, clearly evincing that the announcement of the angel had been kept strictly private.

The immediate result upon Zacharias, v64.

The imposed silence was removed and his customary speech fully restored. The declaration of the angel was literally fulfilled; thus showing, that supernatural power caused and removed the enforced silence.

Zacharias praised God; for what he had done in giving the child; for personal deliverance from a trying ordeal; and for the hope that he could entertain respecting the future.

The result upon others, vs 65,66.

Fear or reverence came upon all around them, owing to the astonishing events connected with this child. The news of it was spread abroad among the people. The question naturally suggested itself, “what then shall (or, will) this child be?” The extraordinary events accompanying his birth indicated that he was Divinely destined for an extraordinary career.

“And (or, for) the hand of the Lord was with him,” i.e. protecting, favoring, and aiding John. God’s blessing abode with him.

Chapter 1:67-80

The prophecy of Zacharias

“And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his people. And has raised up an horn of salvation for us, in the house of his servant David; as he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all who hate us; to perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant, the oath which he swore to our father Abraham, that he would grant unto us, that we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our lives. And thou, child, shall be called, the Prophet of the Highest, for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord, to prepare his ways; to give knowledge of salvation unto his people, by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the day–spring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace. And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel.”

Variations

In v75 in place of “all the days of our lives,” read, “all our days.”

Renderings

In v68, some read “wrought prediction for;” instead of “which had been since the world began,” v70, some read, “which have been of (or, from) the age,” and others, “of (i.e. concerning) the things of the age;” many renderer v72 “to have mercy upon our fathers,” and others, “to perform his mercy with our fathers,” and still others, “to show mercy towards our fathers;” the v78, some, for “through” read “because of,” or others “on account of;” for “tender mercy” some prefer the literal rendering “heart of mercy;” for “day–spring” many

read “day–dawn,” others “sun–rising” (or, “star-rising”); in v80, for “showing,” some rendered “public manifestation,” (or, “appearance”).

Perversions.

1. That all this must be spiritualized, that it cannot be literal.

Ans: This is based upon a gross misconception of the use of language, just as if God said one thing but really meant something else. It refuses to acknowledge the God employs language in accordance with the universal usages and laws of language.

It makes the normal sense of language, when fully ascertained in its plain literal or figurative meaning, to be afterward subject to an allegorizing transformation, –a treatment to which the Bible, of all books, is alone subjected. It pretends that the truth is envelope by a “husk” or “rind” of error, thus making the obvious grammatical sense to be the teaching error.

It perverts the meaning of “spiritually discerned,” forgetting that by this is denoted that we discern or accept of the things given by the Spirit, as e.g. the incarnation, death, resurrection, etc.

It bolsters itself up by an erroneous interpretation and application of the phrase “the letter killeth,” overlooking the fact that the promises of God contained in “the letter,” however exceeding precious and desirable, cannot of themselves bestow life, but required the necessary superadded agency and power of the Spirit.

God does not appeal to a spiritualistic or allegoristic meaning, in behalf of the truth. The appeal of the Christ, the Apostles, the Prophets, and of Apologists, is to the same.

The promises of God being based upon the grammatical sense, a due observance of the same, would enable us to discard the immense varied and contradictory interpretations and applications that only serves to perplex, mislead, and to make the Scriptures antagonistic to each other.

2. That God, in view of human weakness, accommodated his language to Jewish expectations and prejudices.

Ans: This makes the language used deceptive, and makes God, who is the Truth, favoring the practice of deception. It fosters and confirms a faith and hope that are doomed to a sad disappointment.

We cannot place (the Merciful) God, in the position, which Jesus says even an earthly parent will not occupy, viz: of giving a son as stone instead of bread.

It virtually makes God himself the author of error. If the language, owing to this alleged ambiguity, was misunderstood, how then could John, the disciples, and the Jews be held accountable for misapprehending it?

3. It is alleged, that there was no fulfillment of these promises, because Zacharias and the Jewish nation were not delivered from their enemies.

Ans:

Let us await God's own time and way of deliverance. It will come as promised.¹⁰⁶

4. That the enemies, from whom deliverance is promised, are merely 'spiritual enemies,' such as sins, lusts, Satan and his angels, etc.

Ans: Such an interpretation is a violation of Jewish faith and hope, prophecy, and the future as Divinely portrayed.¹⁰⁷

5. We are gravely told that Zacharias did not prophesy, but only uttered a song of praise.

Ans: This is based upon a supposition, that the utterance of Zacharias was evolved from his own inner religious experience. It is a purely imaginary conjecture, seeing that it is not in the text. More

¹⁰⁶ Compare the direct teaching following under vs 71 and 74.

¹⁰⁷ See for reply the direct teaching.

than this; for it is directly opposed by the declaration, v67, that he “was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied.”

6. We are told, that the reference to “the house of David” in v69, must be understood exclusively of descent, and the “horn of salvation” of a spiritual reign.

Ans: Turn to vs 32,33 and see the positive declaration of the angel, that much more is included, viz: the actual occupancy of the Davidic throne and a reign over the Jewish nation. This language must be interpreted in the light and plain grammatical meaning of the Davidic covenant and prediction expanding the meaning of that covenant.

That it means much more is fully evident from the apostolic decision recorded in Acts 15:16. For the identical throne and kingdom overthrown is to be restored, giving a solid basis for a theocratic rule and world dominion.¹⁰⁸ It is language in complete accord with Jewish faith and hope. It is utterly unwarranted on our part to transform it into something else, unless Divinely directed.

7. We are informed that John’s mission was a failure, he not performing the things predicted of him.

Ans: See this answered in direct teaching on vs 76–79.

8. That John’s retirement v80 favors monasticism.

Ans: John lived secluded (i.e.no public life) in the thinly settled community of Hebron, but in daily association with his parents and neighbors, and not in a monastery or under monastic rules. Monasticism was an invention of a later age, and the first decisive historical proof of its actual rise and existence pertains to the fourth century.

The direct teaching

¹⁰⁸ Amos 9:11; Hosea 3:4,5; Eze 21:25–27, etc.

Zacharias was inspired, v67.

The following words are not the result of his pious thoughts and feelings, as many would have us to believe. They are uttered under a Divine impulse, for he “was filled with the Spirit,” i.e. he was directly guided and controlled by the Spirit, and moved to speak. Therefore it is added, that he “prophesied,” i.e. predicted what shall come to pass.¹⁰⁹

“Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel,” v68. The Lord is acknowledged as the source of all blessings. This great and mighty Lord is in a special sense “the God of Israel” owing to his covenanted relationship.

“He hath visited and wrought redemption for the people of Himself,” v68. “Visited,” i.e. for the purpose of aiding, indicates His personal interest.

“Wrought redemption,” i.e. God provides redemption through the Messiah. This implies that redemption was needed, owing to sin, the entailed curse, and the universality of experienced death. This redemption and deliverance through the grace and power of the Christ was prominently set forth by the prophets.¹¹⁰

We must bear in mind, that this was spoken under the Mosaic dispensation, before the call of the Gentiles.

“For his people,” or “the people of himself.” Primarily this refers to the Jewish nation, being God’s own chosen and covenanted people. Observe how redemption is used in direct connection with the nation;¹¹¹ and how redemption is employed as identified with the restoration of the nation;¹¹² how it is used to designate deliverance from death and the grave;¹¹³ how it is employed in relation to perfect

¹⁰⁹ The original word is thus used in Matt 15:7; Mark 7:6; John 11:51; Acts 2:17,18, etc.

¹¹⁰ Compare Isa 62:11,12; 60:16; 59:20; Psa 130:7,8.

¹¹¹ As in chapter 24:21; 2:38; Psa 25:22; Isa 44:22,23.

¹¹² As in the Zech 10:8; Isa 43:1; 52:9; Isa 63:4,9.

¹¹³ As in Hosea 13:14; Psa 49:7,8,14,15.

deliverance of the nation;¹¹⁴ and finally how, therefore, the Messiah is designated the Redeemer, giving perfected redemption.¹¹⁵

Secondly, it embraces, (since the call of the Gentiles), all who accept of Jesus as the Christ;¹¹⁶ all who receive and believe;¹¹⁷ all who become “his people” through faith, being adopted into the body of Israel and reckoned also as “the children of Abraham.”¹¹⁸

“Redemption” is, therefore, employed in the Scriptures as a comprehensive term, embracing the work of God in and through the Messiah in delivering the individual, the nation, and the engrafted ones from the consequences, power, guilt, the entailed curse of sin, the dominance of death, and the rule of all enemies. Experienced redemption consequently embraces forgiveness, freedom from all evil and suffering, the enjoyment of God’s favor and blessing, the bestowment in actual realization of all the covenanted and predicted promises of happiness and glory.

“And has raised up a horn of salvation for us,” v69.

A “horn” is a symbol of strength, power, might, glory, rulers, and civil and political dominion.¹¹⁹ It is directly applied to God in view of his great power;¹²⁰ to the Messiah, David’s descendent;¹²¹ It indicates the irresistible strength and power of the Messiah;¹²²

It is a **“horn of Salvation.”**

According to covenant, prophecy, Jewish faith and hope, while this “salvation” included the forgiveness of sins and inestimable spiritual blessings, it embraced much more, viz: the resurrection of the righteous dead, the restoration and supremacy of the Jewish nation,

¹¹⁴ As in Isa 35:9; 51:11.

¹¹⁵ As in Isa 41:14; 43:14; 44:6; 48:17; 49:7, 26; 54:5,8.

¹¹⁶ Acts 11:18; 13:39, 46, 47; 15:7,8,9,11,14.

¹¹⁷ John 3:14–21,36; 1John 4:14–16; 5:1–5.

¹¹⁸ Gal chapter 3 and Eph chapters 2 and 3.

¹¹⁹ Dan 7:8; 8:5,21; Psa 148:14; Deu 33:17.

¹²⁰ 2Sam 22:3; Psa 18:2.

¹²¹ As was predicted Psa 89:24; 132:17.

¹²² As predicted in Isa 63:1–6; Psa 2; Rev 19; 2Thess 1:4–10.

the world–domain and of the re-erected Theocratic–Davidic throne and Kingdom, the overthrow of all enemies, the subjugation of all nations, and the inheriting of the earth by the righteous.¹²³

“In the house of his servant David”

The Messiah is covenanted to proceed from the Davidic house.¹²⁴ It was predicted throughout the OT scripture.¹²⁵ The prophets in v70 assert this. Jewish faith and hope had the greatest assurances given in the detailed statements of the Prophets, in the appeals made to faithfulness of God, and in the confirmation by oath.

We do not like the rendering of our version, “which have been since the world began.” This not strictly true, because the Prophets only began to refer to this descendent of David’s, after the Seed promised to Abraham was definitely, by covenant arrangement, narrowed down and assigned to the Davidic line. The literal reading is, “of those from an age,” and hence may mean of the Prophets predicting the Messianic age or of those things relating to or concerning the age to come. (Instead of “world,” the Greek is “age.”)

“That we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all that hate us.” The “we” are “the people” of v68 (see notes under) “the people of Israel.”¹²⁶

This deliverance from enemies includes much more than that from “sin, the flesh, the world, and the devil.” It is a declaration that it will be literally realized by the Jewish nation.

¹²³ Isa 25:9; Psa 37:39; 9:14; 98:2; 118:14; 132:16; 85:9; 14:7; Isa 12:2,3; 33:16–22; 45:17; 49:8–11; 59:16–21; 60:1–22; 63:5; 61:10.

¹²⁴ Compare 2Sam 7:10–16; 1Chron 17:11–14, which is “an everlasting covenant,” 2Sam 23:5; Isa 55:3.

¹²⁵ As in Psa 72,132, Acts 2:30,31, Psa 89, 110, Isa 9:7, Jer 23:5,6; 30:9; 33:15–26; Amos 9:11–15; Isa 11:1.

¹²⁶ Acts 4:10,27; 13:17; Rom 11:1,2; 15:10.

Observe the following particulars;

1. At the time this was spoken, the Jewish nation was under the domination of enemies, the Roman power.
2. Owing to the sinfulness of the nation and the rejection of the Messiah, the nation, instead of experiencing deliverance, continues under Gentile domination during an indefinite period called “the times of the Gentiles.”
3. When the nation has passed through its fearful ordeal, and just when it drinks the bitter dregs of its long-endured tribulation, the Lord with his saints shall come and bring glorious deliverance from all enemies.¹²⁷
4. The deliverance from enemies is directly associated with the future restoration and glory of the Jewish nation.¹²⁸
5. Such a deliverance precedes the future Messianic reign as an inevitable result.¹²⁹
6. Such a deliverance is connected with a future Advent.¹³⁰
7. It is directly associated with the Second Advent of the Messiah.¹³¹
8. Such deliverance from enemies is granted at the Second Advent to the believing engrafted Gentiles.¹³²
9. It is a deliverance from those who hate, a hatred culminating in the last great confederation of wickedness.¹³³
10. It includes a deliverance from the enemy death.¹³⁴

¹²⁷ Zech 14, Isa 63:1–6, Mal 4, Zech 12, Dan 12.

¹²⁸ Isa 54:11–17; 66:6–24; Joel 3; Zeph 3, Micah 7.

¹²⁹ Compare Isa chapter 54, 51, 60, 61, 62, 35, 41, 44, 25, 26.

¹³⁰ Psa 37:20; 45:5; 68:1, 2, 21; 97:3; 110:1, 2.

¹³¹ Rev 19:11–21; Zech 14:5; Matt 24:29, 30; Rev 1:7.

¹³² 2Thess 1:4–10; Jude 14, 15; Heb 10:32–37; 2Pet 3:9–13.

¹³³ Rev 11:18; Isa 60:15; Psa 46:6.

¹³⁴ Dan 12:1; Psa 143:2; 1Cor 15:52; 1Thess 4:14.

11. Unless we change the meaning of words, spiritualize the normal sense of prediction; we are forced by consistency to this interpretation. God is faithful and true, and with the encouragements given we simply believe in that which God has spoken.¹³⁵

“To perform the mercy promised to our fathers.” Our version is incorrect; for the word “promised” is not in the original, being supplied, and it reverses the intended meaning by virtually excluding the fathers from a personal participation, confining the realization of the promise to their descendants.

The literal reading is, **“to perform the mercy with (or, to) our fathers.”** That is the distinctive mercy promised to the fathers personally (i.e. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob), in the covenant made with them.

Turning to the covenant, we find that to them personally was promised an inheritance of the land. This was not fulfilled.¹³⁶ To be realized, they must be, according to Jewish belief, raised from the dead, which is necessarily implied in the promise, and so used in Luke 20:37.¹³⁷

It is, therefore, a special, precious act of mercy in which the fathers shall participate, through the re-creative power of the resurrection, and when they thus inherit, with all the greatness and blessedness connected with it, we, adopted as their children by faith, shall inherit with them.

“To remember His holy covenant.”

This covenant is the foundation of faith and hope. To understand God’s dealings in the future, it must be carefully studied and apprehended.

Jewish faith and hope was piously based on two covenants, the Abrahamic and the Davidic. They are both “everlasting” covenants, and must be received in their entirety. The covenants, containing

¹³⁵ Acts 3:19–25; 15:13–18; Rom 11; Rev 11:15–18.

¹³⁶ Acts 7:5; Heb 9:8,9; 11:13-40.

¹³⁷ Compare notes on Matt 22:23 and Mark 12:18.

Divine promises, are not to be regarded as typical of something else, but the plain grammatical sense must be received.

As a portion of these covenants have been literally fulfilled in the preparatory coming of the Seed and David's son, we must believe that the remainder will likewise, in God's way and time be likewise thus fulfilled.

These covenants God will "remember," i.e. cause them to be realized, just as they read. For His word and faithfulness are pledged. God would never give such express warrants of belief, and excite the faith and the hope of the pious Jews, only to disappoint them by the substitution of something else.

"The oath which he swore to our father Abraham."

The certainty of fulfillment and realization is thus assured. The oath is not attached to typical, spiritual, or mystical language. Foreseeing the unbelief in these covenants, owing both to the requirement of the Supernatural to verify them, and to the long delay before fully realized, God attaches His oath to make unbelief inexcusable.¹³⁸

"To grant us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies." Compare the interpretation under v71.

"Should serve (or, worship) him without fear, in holiness and righteousness all our days," v74,75. The Revision and the best MSS omit the words in our version "of our life." Correctly too, because it limits the life, implying until our death.

"All our days," is unlimited, denoting simply during existence.¹³⁹ In confirmation of our interpretation we only need refer to the future blessings in the glorious days of the Messianic reign, as follows;

¹³⁸ Gen 22:16; 24:7; 26:3; Micah 7:20; Heb 6:13,14,etc.

¹³⁹ For these are the "days" described in Psa 89:29; 72:11; 21:4; Jeremiah 33:16, etc.

Fear removed.¹⁴⁰ Holiness is characteristic of those Messianic days.¹⁴¹ Righteousness shall then prevail.¹⁴²

John was called, “The Prophet of the Highest,” or “The Most High,” v76. John had the distinguished honor of being appointed and guided by God in declaring His will.

“Thou shalt go before the face of the Lord.” i.e. to be a forerunner of the Messiah, called “Lord” or “Jehovah,” indicating the Divine associated with him.

“To prepare his ways,” i.e. to announce the coming of the Messiah to the nation, and try to persuade to his reception. John’s entire ministry evidences that this was his glorious mission. While unsuccessful in influencing the nation at large (Matt 11:16-19) or the ruling powers (Luke 7:30), yet he prepared many hearts to receive and believe in the incoming Messiah.

John’s mission was to the nation, serving as a testimony and a warning. It was the testimony required by the covenanted relationship of the nation, and a warning in view of the foreknown rejection of the Messiah and the downfall of the nation.

“To give knowledge of salvation unto his people,” v77.

This is, to impart information respecting the way and the author of salvation. For the “salvation” and the “people” denoted, compare v68, under “c” preceding.

“By the remission of their sins,” or, “in the forgiveness of their sins.” Pardon, or forgiveness of sin, an absolute pre-requisite.¹⁴³ It is associated with the Messiah.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴⁰ Isa 54:4; Jer 23:4; Micah 7:7-20.

¹⁴¹ Psa 110:3; Zech 14:20; Isa 35:8; 62:9.

¹⁴² Isa 54:14, 17; 32:16, 17; 51:1-6; 61:3; 62:1, 2.

¹⁴³ See Isa 65:7; Eze 18:21–23; 23:11; Hos 14:1, 2, 7; Psa 7:12, 13; Acts 20:21; 26:20.

¹⁴⁴ Compare Luke 24:46, 47; Acts 5:31; 2:38; 10:43; 13:38; Rom 3:5; 5:9.

John's mission brought remission or forgiveness to individuals, just as the preaching and acceptance of Jesus, the Christ, now does.

But this includes much more, viz: the still future glorious forgiveness and free pardon of the Jewish nation to the Divine favor and blessing. The predictions are numerous and precise on this point.¹⁴⁵

The delay in fulfillment, caused by the sinfulness of the nation, should not cause unbelief in the final realization, for the assurances given are too great to be set aside.¹⁴⁶

“Through (on account of) the tender mercies (or compassions) of our God close.” God's mercy, compassion, or love, is the source of all our blessings.¹⁴⁷ Particularly manifested in the giving of the Messiah and the inauguration of his reign.¹⁴⁸ In the restitution this will be fully acknowledged.¹⁴⁹

“Whereby the day–spring (or, by preference, the sun–rising) from on high has visited us,” v78. The present under an entailed curse is represented as “the night;” and the deliverance from the curse under the reign of the Messiah, is represented as “the morning,” the “day–dawn.”¹⁵⁰

But reference is here had to direct former predictions pertaining to the Messiah, represented as the Morning Star, (the Morning Sun).¹⁵¹

“To give light to them (or, to shine to those) that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, (or even in death shade), to guide our feet into the way of peace,” v79. This Takes place under the reign of the Messiah referred, as a result of the shining forth of the expected “Sun of righteousness.” Now we have only a faint, but blessed, earnest of the full intended meaning intended by these

¹⁴⁵ Compare Micah 7:18–20; Isa chapter 12 connected with preceding chapter 42:2; 51:9–16; 54; chapter 60, 61, 62.

¹⁴⁶ Compare Acts 3:19–21; 15:14–18; Rom 11.

¹⁴⁷ Compare Exod 34:6, 7; Psa 86:5, 15; Num 14:18; Neh 9:17.

¹⁴⁸ Compare Psa 89:1,2,14,24,28; Isa 54:7,8; 60:10, etc.

¹⁴⁹ Micah 7:18-20; Isa 33:9; Psa 145:7; 89:5,6,16,17.

¹⁵⁰ Psa 30:5; Rom 13:12; Isa 21:11; Hos 6:3; Psa 49:14,15.

¹⁵¹ 2Sam 23:1-4; Psa 110:2,3; Mal 4:2; Rev 2:28; 22:16.

words. Whatever of enlightenment, deliverance from sin, divine guidance, peace in believing, we received, these are far from exhausting the intent of the prediction, which embraces the future.

This will distinctly and impressively appear, when we compare this language with other Scriptural representations, especially former predictions, and thus see what is embraced in it. The affliction and tribulation of the Jewish nation, is called, Jeremiah 13:16, a time of darkness, the shadow of death, and growth darkness.¹⁵²

Now under the restitution inaugurated by the Messiah, this darkness will be all swept away and the nation be exalted. The prophets declare that the Lord, owing to sinfulness, caused this darkness, and that, at the set time to favor Zion, he will cause the light to dispel it, through the realized blessings covenanted. Hence when the Lord comes to remove this darkness, he comes in a dark day (i.e. a time of sore trial).¹⁵³

But even more is included; for in this “darkness and shadow of death,” we find, according to Scripture usage, reference is made to death and the grave.¹⁵⁴ Now it is a distinguishing characteristic of the future coming of the Lord, that he destroys death and the grave.¹⁵⁵

Then in this present period of restitution under the Messianic rule, one of the resultants frequently predicted is this “peace” here mentioned.¹⁵⁶

The development of John, v80.

Growth in body and mind, under God’s care He grew to manhood, and he increased in knowledge and understanding, being duly fitted for the position that he was to occupy. This preparatory training was

¹⁵² Isa 5:30; 8:22; 24:11; 59:9; Joel 2:2; Amos 5:18, 20; Micah 3:6

¹⁵³ Isa 60:1,2; Eze 34:12–31; Isa 62:1–4.

¹⁵⁴ This is directly done in Job 10:21,22; Psa 88:11,12; 143:5; 44:19.

¹⁵⁵ Isa 25:6–9; 26:19; Dan 12:2; Eze 37:11–14; 1Thess 4:14–16; 1Cor 15:52.

¹⁵⁶ Isa 26:3,12; 32:17,18; 54:10,13; 55:12; 66:12. Compare also the predictions of Isa 9:6,7; Psa 72:7.

The Testimony of Luke

passed in the thinly settled country of Hebron, in the state of comparative privacy and obscurity.

He remained thus, known to but few, about thirty years, when he entered upon his brief, but eventful, public ministry. The expression, "showing unto Israel," again indicates, that all the descendants of Jacob were included under the favorite and common name of "Israel."